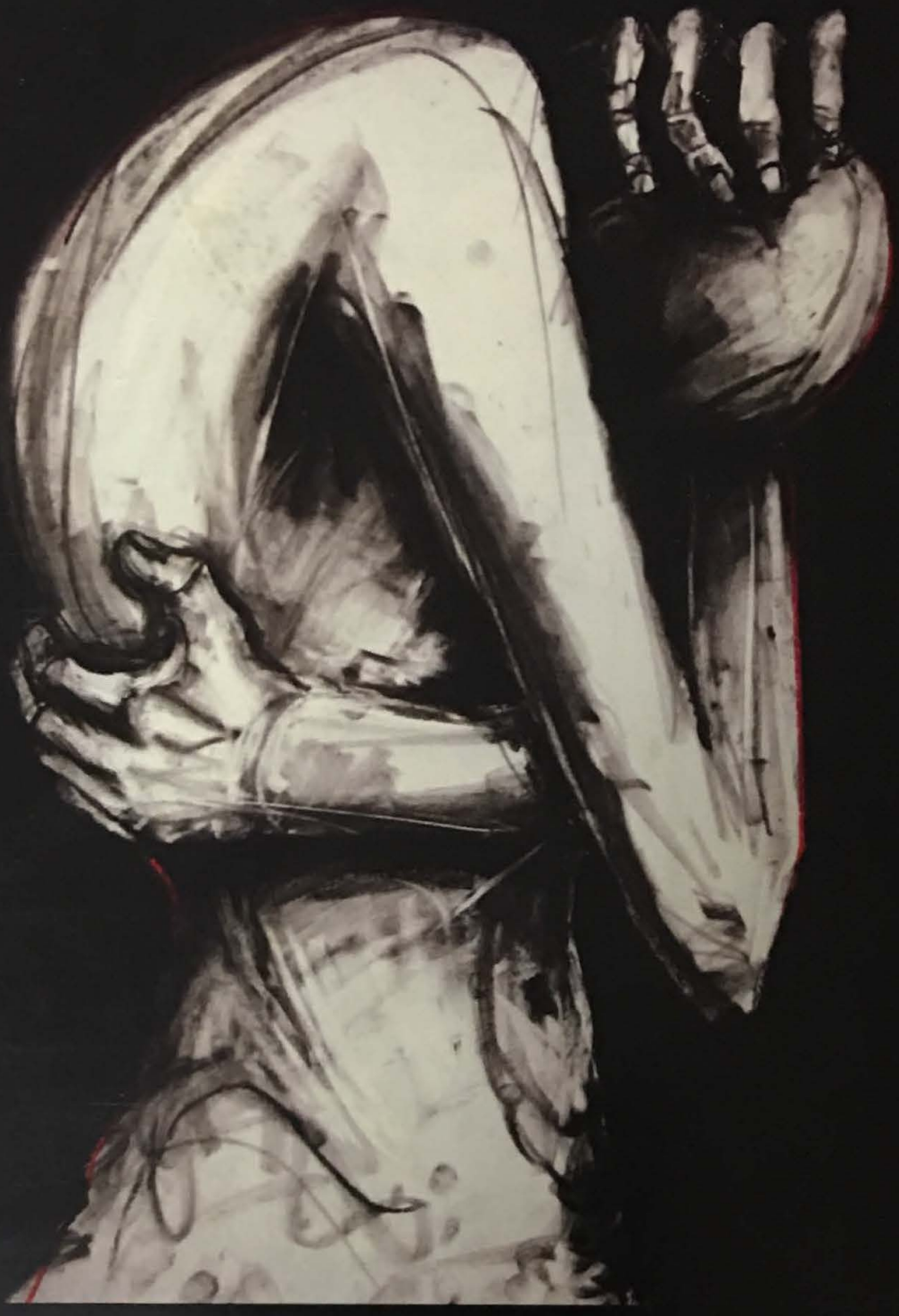
In the Grove

An Homage to Andrés Montoya

Guest Edited by Daniel Chacón



Spring 2008

Pákatelas

In the Grove

In the Grove

An Homage to Andrés Montoya

Guest Edited by Daniel Chacón

Spring 2008

Number 16

http://inthegrove.net

ISSN 1536–1551

The following poems have appeared in other publications.

Corrinne Clegg Hales's "Hectograph: Words Rising."
From *Nimrod.*

Garret Hongo's "Holiday in Honolulu"
From *HONOLULU WEEKLY*

Daniel A.Olivas' "Pico Boulevard, October 1972" from *Perihelion* and "Letters to Norco" from *Indiana English*

Oscar Bermeo's "Viewing the world from the back of a turtle"
From *Five Fingers Review 24: Foreign Lands and Alternate Universes.*

Daniel Chacón would like to thank Lee Herrick for his amazing support and good will in the process of putting together this issue. This homage to Andrés would not have been possible without his love, patience, and creative integrity.

In the Grove
An Homage to Andrés Montoya
Guest Edited by Daniel Chacón
Cover Art by Malaquias Montoya

Spring 2008
Number 16

Guest Editor	Daniel Chacón
Layout	Mike Cole
Copy Editors	Kenneth Chacón
	Optimism One
Web Design	Erik Fritz
Publisher	Lee Herrick

In the Grove publishes established and emerging writers from California's Central Valley and throughout the state. Published once per year, each issue features nationally recognized, award–winning writers alongside vibrant new voices.

Submissions are welcome February through May of each calendar year. For a complete list of submission guidelines, please visit http://inthegrove.net. Subscriptions are $7 per year or $13 for two years. Back and individual issues are available for $7. Donations are also welcome. Please make checks payable to *In the Grove*. For subscriptions or donations, please visit http://inthegrove.net.

Please direct all mail to:

In the Grove
PO Box 16195
Fresno, CA 93755

E–mail: leeherrick@hotmail.com

ISSN 1536–1551

Visit us online at http://inthegrove.net

voices that echo

friends and family

teachers

pákatelas

INTRODUCTION

Andrés believed that in a work of art, form and meaning are inseparable. He once told Steve Yarbrough, "You have to think of the whole book as one long poem and put the parts in the right places or the whole thing will just be noise." I want the same thing to be true with this issue. I want it to be an issue honoring Andrés, his spirit, his art, presented in four parts. The first part, *voices that echo*, is made up of young poets who have either been influenced by Andrés or whose voices resonate with a similar passion and spirit. This section includes Sheryl Luna, whose book *Pity the Drowned Horses* was the first winner of the Notre Dame Andrés Montoya poetry prize. It also includes UTEP MFA graduate Javier Huerta, who is currently earning a PhD in literature at Berkeley. His book, *Some Clarifications y Otras Poemas* (Arte Público Press) is winner of the 2006 UC Irvine Chicano Literary Prize. This is the same award that Andrés won in 1998, the award that got him his book contract for the *Ice Worker Sings and Other Poems*. Some of the poets in the *voices* section are working on their first books, writing them or sending them out to publishers and contests, but some already have books published. David Dominguez came out with *Work Done Right* in 2002 (University of Arizona Press) and Paul López published *Death of a Mexican and Other Poems* (Bear Star Press) in 2005. Daniel A. Olivas is the author of several books, among them the story collections *Devil Talk* and *Assumption* (Bilingual Press). He is editor of the forthcoming anthology *Latinos in Lotusland*, which is made up of Chicano poetry and fiction coming out of LA.

Rigoberto González, a contemporary of Andrés, has almost too many books to list, novels, memoir, and poetry. These include the critically acclaimed *So Often the Picture Goes to Water Until it Breaks* (University of Illinois Press) and *Other Fugitives and Other Strangers* (Tupelo Press). He's one of the most well-known Chicano writers of Andrés' (and my) generation, and his brilliant essay on Andrés in this issue not only puts Andrés' work into context with Fresno and Chicano poetry, but it also shows how much of an impact he has had on other writers.

The second part is called *family and friends*—for obvious reasons. I'm pleased to include Andrés' little brother Maceo Montoya, who is fast becoming one of the most well-known of the Chicano-Famous Montoya clan. I solicited this piece for our book when I heard his father, the artist Malaquias Montoya (see the cover art) read it at a conference on Chicano art at the University of Texas, Austin. He

was one of the keynote speakers, and to begin his talk, he pulled out a letter his young son had written him, and he read it. His words were used as that weekend's springboard from which the conference participants could talk about the state of Chicano art. The piece brings to mind Andrés' poem "Landscape of Sadness: Letter to the Artist From His Son" from *the iceworker sings*. Like Andrés, Maceo is passionate, in love with justice and art. He is also an up-and-coming writer working on at least three novels (I've read two of them), one of which has just been picked up by Andrés' publisher and will be coming out next year. He received an MFA in art from NYU. His work is striking in its passion and love for *la gente,* just like his brother. (See his images at maceomontoya.com).

I also included in *friends and family* John. B. Boyd and Augustine F. Porras. Andrés and I were the only two Chicanos in the MFA program at the University of Oregon. We felt alone there, both of us out of Atzlán for the first time in our adult lives. The MFA at Oregon was not an easy school to get into, six poets and six fiction writers a year, and Andrés and I thought it was strange and far too coincidental that we both got accepted the same year, both of us with a full ride. Not only were we both Chicanos, but we were from the same town, Fresno, the same university, Fresno State, and we even lived in the same apartment, a rundown complex with hundreds of units. I remember his call came from then-director Garrett Hongo a week before my call came, the same phone line, the same phone number. At the time, we were both somewhat radical Chicano activists (or thought of ourselves as such) at Fresno State, so we thought the FBI must have arranged both of us to be accepted, that way they could keep an eye on us, contain our activism in that small Oregon city. When we got there we felt somewhat paranoid and alienated, however, the second year Augie and John got accepted into the Program. Porras is a Chicano from LA and Boyd a Native from the Washington rez, Elwha Klallam. We four became friends very quickly, and together we felt at home. Both Porras and Boyd deeply loved Andrés, as is obvious in their poems for this book. I'm proud that we four can be kicking it again, hanging out together again, or at least the three of us, spilling forty ounces of poetry onto the cracked concrete of our homeland.

Also in this section is Andrés' uncle José Montoya, el maestro, one of the founders of the RCAF, aka, the Rebel Chicano Art Front, aka, the *Royal Chicano Air Force*. Andrés admired him, read his poetry aloud to anyone who listened. He liked to perform "El Louie," a classic Montoya poem, and he knew "The Moco Poem" by heart, which he recited so often that I learned it too. He performed

Street style, phantasmagoric theatrics, taking the center stage of our living room, or on the balcony, where a bunch of us hung out drinking beer.

If there's a moco on my bigote
Don't suffer me shame
By keeping silent.
Tell me about it!

We cannot talk of Andrés poetry without including the influence of his tío José.

I also included poems by Tim Z. Hernandez, whose first book of poems, called *Skin Tax* (Heyday Books), like Andrés' first book of poems, won the American Book Award. These two guys had many conversations about poetry, one in which Andrés told the younger poet, "I write for God." You can sense Andrés' spirit in the poetry of Hernandez. They are like brothers in the word. Also included is one of Andrés' students of Chicano literature at Fresno City College, Michael Luis Medrano, whose first book of poems has just been accepted for publication by Bilingual Review Press.

The third section is called *teachers*, and these are the poetry teachers that mattered most to Andrés. I won't say much about these writers, because their names speak for themselves. I won't list their many books (I wonder how many published books there are among all these?) Andrés told me that these people published here taught him more about teaching poetry than anyone else. Everyone in this section is a great teacher. Corrinne Clegg Hales was an aggressive advocate for Andrés' poetry, and without her help his work may not have had the incredible success that it's having.

As you look through the book, you'll see that the sections are divided by *memories* from people who knew him. These are brief images, flashes of other souls who have crossed paths with Andrés. Juan Felipe Herrera provides the memory for the teacher section, because he was a great teacher for Andrés. He taught Andres how to find the jazz and hip hop in poetry, how to twist and bend sentences into rhythm and blues. He was a poet who Andrés read aloud, and then he'd put down the book and say, *Damn!*

The title section of this book, *Pákatelas*, is a word Andrés imagined into being and which can be found in the fields and the warehouses around Fresno. In the packing houses, Mexican workers are on their feet for hours packing fruits or cans into boxes going by on a belt, the sound of the machines not able to drown the voice of the foreman, yelling at a worker who's not going fast enough, ¡Pákatelas! a Spanglish way of saying, "Pack those things!" The stress is on the

first syllable, *Pack-a-te-las*. It is an imperative conjugation of the English verb *to pack*, a command, *Pack those things!* In his first book, *the iceworker sings*, the story of the Chicano poet is often told through the worker of jobs in the Valley that only Chicano/as will do. Pákatelas is the name of the last poem in Andrés' new manuscript, *Universe, Breath and All*. This new book of poems is Andrés' portrait of a Chicano Artist as a young man. He writes about realizing his love for words and sounds, about his family and childhood, the story of how he fell in love with the Holy Spirit of Language.

In this section we present "Páketelas" in its entirety. The section, however, begins with an homage, three poems from *the iceworker sings and other poems*, translated into Spanish by the poet Verónica E. Guajardo, a California Chicana from Modesto. She is currently working on her MFA in the bilingual Creative Writing Program at UTEP and is the editor of the *Rio Grande Review*. She is also the co-editor for *The Second Coming*, an anthology about Chicano/a faith and spirituality. When Andrés was alive, they would spend hours on the phone, talking poetry and God. Andrés loved the sound of Spanish, even though he was still coming into it when he died, so we know he would love the sound of these translations.

If we look at "Pákatelas," we see the story of Coming into Language, falling in love with words. In many ways that's what this entire issue of *In the Grove* is about, the ways we come into words. Poetry is a tool, a weapon from God, and one of the strengths of Andrés' poetry is how it can show us beauty in the language of Aztlán. There is beauty in the sounds of the packing house, beauty in the smells of the streets. His poetry can even give us glimpses into the beauty in the ugly, beauty in pain, despair, violence, but mostly, he shows us the amazing beauty of grace.

Daniel Chacón

voices that echo

memory i

I remember vividly when I first read Andrés Montoya's poetry. I was the poetry editor for *In the Grove* and had been going through stacks and stacks of submissions that quite frankly did not move me. Then this diamond in the rough appeared, singing a song I knew but that was new.

To me, for poetry to be effective, it has to either touch me in a familiar place or inspire me to see the world with different eyes and aspire to higher realities. Andrés' poems did all of these.

I remember calling Lee (Herrick, *In the Grove* editor) and saying, "Holy crap! Who is this guy?" At the time, I had worked in a factory for years, slugging it out as a machine operator and struggling to keep my soul afloat (and largely failing). When I read "the ice worker sings," I felt like my life was not only affirmed but that there was hope, hope of survival and hope of redemption. It also made me want to write.

I remember typing out part of "the ice worker sings" and putting it on my fridge.

> this is how he became a poet
> parting ways with the sad ocean
> of ordinary speech. he sang loud
> and he liked it. no one ever told him
> to shut up, or that he couldn't carry a tune.

It's still there, ten years later. It still moves. It still inspires.

I no longer work in a factory, and perhaps somehow Andrés is partly responsible for that, but he does more than make me remember. Andrés' words remind me to embrace the moment, the right now, and go for it. Such is the power of his work.

Optimism One

mónica teresa ortiz

el paso

THE WOMAN WHO DOESN'T EXIST

la llorona doesn't reside in Nazareth
or Hereford or even Lubbock her moans
can't be thrown above April
winds blowing down feed yards la llorona's cries
are never heard in this part of Texas her whistles can't slide
under cracks in doors or uproot shingles from rooftops she ain't
no tornado that's for sure she ain't got the power of a May twister
the one that tore through the Wyatt's
house no crying woman could match that
pitch she can't coat floors and window sills
with dust she can't pick up tractors
she has no fertilizer to feed her legend not in the wide
open plains her children
can't be lost in a field with a view so
panoramic grain elevators can be seen
from Mars nights so lit folks
feel safe with unlocked doors
the west Texas sky sleeps on top
of the grass and nothing
gets in the way of those two lovers
most importantly la llorona
wouldn't ever find her drowned
kids there ain't no rivers
or lakes or creeks to support her myth
after four and five year
droughts the weeping woman has no
water to haunt and no trees to
hide behind every house along the
flat plains owns at least one type of gun
if she lived in Nazareth or Hereford
or even Lubbock somebody
would have shot her by now

HUMAN RESOURCES

wetback actually means go
back to the country you came from repatriate
migrants you have no legal right
here no human right but well wait
just a second let's reconsider if you will
around on the corner of Brazos
in downtown Austin a man in a truck might pick
you up I hear he needs a brick layer to lay the foundation
for the new bank he got a fat contract
but understand you are only expendable cheap
labor so as long as you wetback
don't mind sharing a one bedroom apartment
with eight other men that came from Tamaulipas
or Oaxaca or wherever you come from if that
makes no difference to you
you can stay and your employer will look
the other way he doesn't ask you don't tell
you don't need papers to make it
you might even learn
how to cook tortillas you
might learn a little English
while you're here while you
build that new building while you
work as an ox we can be good
neighbors just accept that on Fridays
your boss might forget to pay you or might
withhold your check don't forget wetback
there ain't a thing you can do about it he can
have you deported back
to Querétaro or Jimenez or Juárez or
wherever the hell you came from
there's enough of you to go around if you
complain if you open your goddamn Spanish speaking
mouth you wetbacks are like the hydra
that snake with a hundred heads chop off one

and two more grow back
in its place your boss will just go
back to the corner of Brazos and find a shiny new
Mojado with shiny new boots and
a big belt buckle and that Mojado
will gladly
jump into the bed
of the truck he won't have
a problem working
more
for less
hell
we're doing him
a favor he earns more
in a day here
than he does in a month there
in Mexico

PRACTICE

The boss, the gordo in *Los Gordos*. Rolly polly jolly
man scribbles orders of comida corrida and asks,
where are you from?, pointing at me,
smiling at me, expecting an answer
like Oaxaca or Chiapas or some other
plot of land located in the interior part of Mexico
where Indios sleep under trees, dressed
in white pants and white guayaberas, barefoot.
Or maybe he wanted me to be an Apache
princess riding a pinto horse bareback,
braving the white man
like Pocahontas [but not like la Malinche].
Texas, I say,
tracing the state in the air.

[I taught myself to pronounce Texas high and long when I was five years old. TEX-US. I practiced and practiced so I could say it the same way the little white kids did at Lucky You Preschool. I never forgot that. Never forgot that to pronunciate and to imitate is to survive. I never forgot the way Oscar died, refusing to pronounce and imitate Texas as anything except Tejas until his truck chickened out along the FM road, his own face as wide and brown as mine. For us both, it will always be fight or flight. And forgetting is always forgiving and I shall never forget because I stood at his graveside, staring down into the six foot hole at burial. My soul tumbled into his grave, clacking like beads gunshot against a closed casket.]

We might have been brothers, I told the man.
It was true.
Babel separated us.

oscar bermeo

oakland—the bronx

VIEWING THE WORLD FROM THE BACK OF A TURTLE

> *"Those born near the sea will always carry with them, always, some sense or salt from that sea no matter how far away from it they travel."*
>
> – Aracelis Girmay

I was born in the breath of the Pacific Ocean, child of shore and nets. My family would wake at dawn and cast their arms of rope and mesh to Mother Ocean in prayer and hope, as the sun would be born again over the Andes Mountains.

By the time the business district would wake, my father and uncles would return with the day's catch, my mother and aunts would clean the ocean harvest and my cousins and I would announce the day's specials. We sold shrimp, clams, lobster, sea bass and monkfish till the sun reached its highest arc, walked away with whatever moneys we had then ate the rest of the catch. We grew up very poor but with smiles at the kitchen table.

My father grew tired of the surf's inconsistencies. He found wings and traveled north to concrete mountains, cracked asphalt earth where the opportunity to make money never really ends. He worked till he could fashion wings for my mother and soon she followed.

I was still a child of foam and trees, now an apprentice in my Grandmother's kitchen. Learning the language of roots and herbs, as my fingers became knife edges and my palms a pilón to crush the fruit of wet dirt and my arms growing baskets as I was soon to be a man of red clay hands that would return him to the sea.

Without warning I grew wings and was pulled from the Pacific and Andes and the word "abandon" became a cut in the roof of my mouth that has followed me since.

The Atlantic tried to wash this taste out of me, tried to adopt me when I fell from the sky but I rejected its touch. The ocean around me was no longer the blue of robin's eggs but became the color of envy and hurt. I navigate the waters of my new home with a reverence born of fear thinking I may drown in it all if my heart should ever speak in my native language.

Though a child of the Pacific, I have always lived with fire on my tongue and decided to abandon the waters in search of a new home. I made a pilgrimage to the sun, found a point in the tan rocky earth where the sky's touch is as inviting as a mother's cheek.

Here I slept with words and mirage, history and propaganda, griots and charlatans, the fools and children God always cares for walking through the desert with a letter of orange flowers in my hand seeking azure wings to bring it to the Pacific which was always in my heart but now first in my thoughts.

My pilgrimage led me to a place where the mesa meets the ocean, where if you point to the dawn everything is the color of street lamps and glossy rain, where if you seek the dusk everything is improbable shooting stars and amber mist.

And from that mist formed a bay which I fell into without knowing how to swim but knowing I wouldn't drown where I was greeted by a shark who was a woman, who was fire petals, who was creation, who was chocolate sea salt kiss, who was a crooked smile, who was silver signet, who wore a sacred heart, wrote her own story, who was difficult, who was the Pacific, who was a shark who never meant me any harm, who was the ocean welcoming me home.

rigoberto gonzález

new york city

ANDRÉS MONTOYA: THE ICE WORKER STILL SINGS

1. i believe in the Resurrection

In the year 2000 I received an invite from the Before Columbus Foundation to celebrate the recipients of the American Book Award. Among the winners listed was *the iceworker sings* by Andrés Montoya, a first book of poetry that had been published in 1999, the same year my first book had been released. Though *So Often the Pitcher Goes to Water until It Breaks* had also competed for the American Book Award, I still considered the volumes companions and not competitors, and certainly we two Chicano poets had to be compañeros, since both Montoya and I were embarking on a publishing/ literary career simultaneously. And that wasn't the first time I had come across his name or this intriguing title. Just a few years before, Montoya's book had won the Chicano/ Latino Literary Prize from UC Irvine. I had submitted my manuscript to that competition as well; thus I subsequently received the announcement of his prize-winning entry.

Indeed I had been beat out twice by Montoya, but my book had taken a very different path toward acknowledgement and recognition, so I didn't dwell on defeat. As far as I was concerned, we had both fared well. Besides, my mind was focused on another matter altogether: getting in touch with him.

In the pre-search engine dependence era, I began to seek this fellow poet out via my cohorts. *He's related to José Montoya. He's the son of Malaquías Montoya. He's one of the Fresno poets. He studied with Garrett Hongo and Philip Levine.* The facts of his pedigree thrilled me, and I fantasized about the many pláticas we would have about writing, literature and the artists we both admired.

I was living in New York City at the time and though I had latched on to the Asian American community of writers, mostly because my then partner was one of the original founders of the Asian American Writers Workshop, I was feeling particularly disconnected to the politicized Chicano arena of the Southwest. In the Northeast the Latino literary scene was dominated by the Nuyorican spoken word artists and I had been subjected to one too many embarrassing assumptions about both my ethnic identity and my poetics. One notable faux pas occurred when I was invited to a commemorative reading in Spanish Harlem in honor of the recently-deceased musical genius Tito Puente. The event was to be televised, and since I was the second reader there was no time to explain to the musician sitting behind me on the stage that my work didn't merit musical accompaniment, which he figured out after the first stanza or so. In the end, he simply clucked his tongue to some rhythm of his own making while I read the title poem of my book.

I rushed through the performance, thankful that the cameras didn't capture the sea of confused faces that were sitting before me.

So when the possibility arose of setting up a coast-to-coast pen pal correspondence with the young poet from Fresno and my contemporary (we were less than two years apart in age), I followed through. First, however, I had to make sure I read his works so that he wouldn't confuse me for some literary tourist who was simply reaching out to him because he had a prize-winning collection of poems or because he had something I didn't have.

I envisioned sending him a copy of my book with my initial letter, signing it, "For a brother in struggle." I would tell him that I had met his tío José in Davis, CA, back in 1993, while he was on the road promoting his book of collected verse, *Information: 20 Years of Joda*. When he signed my book—"To Rigoberto from Michoacán"—he also thanked me for being the only one in the room who knew to respond *Power!* when he first called out *Chicano!* I would also tell Andrés that I had seen his primo Richard in no less than five performances of Culture Clash, once in New York at a free showing as part of Central Park's Summer Stage Series, and that many of the jokes didn't get a laugh so Richard kept saying, "The one Chicano in the crowd got that one, The one Chicano in the crowd got that one," and how I wanted to leap up and identify myself as the one Chicano in the crowd, the one who was also feeling a little bit lost and who was madly searching for an umbilical cord back to Aztlán.

Aztlán. The word released a scent into the air, as if I were opening an old box of mementos, testaments to the times of my great awakening. The Montoyas had been constructing paths toward the politics of Chicano identity and culture for generations, and were important presences in any Chicano Studies curriculum. I remember my former teacher at UC Davis, Francisco X. Alarcón, a legend of Chicano poetry himself, bringing in film, theater, and slides with representations of Chicano art. It was impossible not to swell with pride at the beauty of these unapologetic mirrors that reflected back what many of us had been told to hide, forget or deny. Among the artists was Malaquías Montoya—his brush strokes were never silent; they wore the sound of pain and sweat and strength.

That semester, spring of 1993, Maestro Alarcón walked into the room in tears because both César Chávez and Cantinflas had just died, one right after the other. Their legacies became more urgent than ever and we rushed into memory: those of us who came from farmworking families admitted to it; those of us who had been tickled by the Mexican comic recalled his antics and watching his black and white movies in the living rooms of our youth while sitting with our parents or grandparents. And then Maestro Alarcón took us to the fancy de Young Museum

in San Francisco to absorb an exhibition of pre-Columbian artifacts; and then Maestro Alarcón put us on the local radio to read our poems and we read them nervously and with slight embarrassment that we had gotten all gussied up only to be heard and not seen; and then Maestro Alarcón took us to a party at La Galería de la Raza in Sacramento, where an older generation of writers were talking story about the days of the Brown Berets in the 70s, and how touching that they kept declaring that it was us, the next generation in the 90s, that would keep the revolutionary spirit circulating on this earth once they were gone. And that is how a Chicano shapes a Chicano. How could I not be part of a larger mission after that? How could I not seek out my allies?

So, Andrés, fellow poet, fellow Chicano, will you be that ally? Will you keep me grounded to the world of the Central Valley farmlands where my family picked grapes? Will you look for me in the city of the skyscraper and the subway and the 24-hour bodegas where I can find any word from any part of the world, except for the word *Chicano*? Andrés Montoya, will you please write back?

Oddly enough, in the few exchanges I had about Montoya with other writers, no one mentioned the most vital piece of information: that he was deceased. It wasn't until I received his book in the mail, sitting back on the couch and preparing for a pleasant trip back to Califas, that my heart stopped at reading the opening phrase of his bio: *The late Andrés Montoya...*

A great sense of loss consumed me. The pangs became greater still as I read stunning poem after stunning poem. And Manhattan was getting larger and lonelier by the minute as the streets outside the apartment grew louder with the rush-hour traffic. But by the end of the first read-through, when the evening had settled into the tranquility of dusk and dinnertime, I understood why no one had mentioned that Andrés Montoya had died. Andrés Montoya was not dead; he was very much alive.

2. *coming forth from this earth, this dirt*

I will argue that in the Chicano literary sphere there are two city names that get invoked more than any other: El Paso and Fresno. Those in the know, those who read and appreciate Chicano letters, will probably conclude that it's not much of an argument. It's fact. I have ceased to be surprised when I hear that another poet situates his/her work if not his/her familial history to either of these places. The lineage is extensive and impressive. I once joked to a friend, there must be something in the water, or, as Estela Portillo Trambley once declared, the

air. Blame all those pollutants of ASARCO in Texas. And in the case of the Central California Valley, blame the pesticides.

Though I can stretch the length of this section by delving into the phenomenon that is the El Chuco "Xicanorati"—to borrow the term from Lorna Dee Cervantes—I want to focus on Fresno, and poetry in particular. About El Chuco I will simply say that I have come to know the one hundred (and counting) versions and visions of the city and its surroundings so intimately over the years, from the novels of Arturo Islas, Benjamin Alire Sáenz and Alicia Gaspar de Alba, to the stories of Estela Portillo Trambley, Richard Yañez, Christine Granados and Sergio Troncoso, to the poetry of Ricardo Sánchez, Pat Mora, and Sheryl Luna. And of course, the writings of José Antonio Burciaga. The list goes on. I was not surprised to end up a book reviewer for the *El Paso Times* because the activist fervor, complex and conflicted that it sometimes can be, continues to run through every vein of the community—and quite palpably through the arts. El Paso is, after all, a linguistic, cultural, sociopolitical border Mecca of clashing and colliding perspectives. I have been there countless times via the written word, and it's a place I look forward to revisiting.

Likewise I have come to know the Fresno of the poetic imagination. Although readers and critics make reference to "the Fresno school" of poetry, a class-conscious sensibility that includes Gary Soto and Juan Felipe Herrera, but also the poets Philip Levine and Larry Levis, the common ground usually ends there since, aesthetically, these poets travel very disparate terrains. But that speaks to a city's awesome ability to embrace and nurture the many creative paths out and back in to its cultural corazón. In the next generation, the list of Central Valley poets who have published notable books includes Blas Manuel de Luna, David Dominguez, and of course, Andrés Montoya. (Very male-dominant, I realize, but Chicano literature also has the unique distinction of having a very female-dominant list of fiction writers.)

So, what is so remarkable about Fresno, the crown jewel of the San Joaquin Valley, the sixth largest city in California? Like many California towns, Fresno has grown to become a sizeable urban center, swallowing up land and water resources that were once the domain of the agricultural business. Each year there is less demand for employment in harvesting grape, tomato, almond and nectarine (among 250 other crops) and more in the food processing plants like those that package the Sun Maid raisins that have christened Fresno the Raisin Capital of the World. And there are other businesses that have moved in, taking advantage of the cheap land. Like Gap, whose distribution site squats over no less than eighty fertile acres of soil.

The population has grown steadily, though it continues to be mostly white, followed closely behind by, according to the census bureau, "Latinos of all races." At last count the general population was well over a million for the entire metropolitan area, its increase fed by the Los Angeles residents relocating from the south and the San Francisco residents relocating from the north, many of them tempted to the meeting point with its affordable middle-class housing. Indeed the city has been working tirelessly for decades to manufacture a certain image of itself by building large cultural and commercial attractions: the fancy museum, where fans of American literature can browse through the William Saroyan Gallery (Saroyan, you know, was a Fresno native), and the fancy coliseum, where lucky ticket-holders can attend concerts given by such notable music industry icons as The Rolling Stones.

But the aforementioned statistics, demographicsd revitalization efforts are matters of public record, which awakens my curiosity: Where, then, can I find the more private matters? That is, those neighborhoods which are not included in the city's street-sweeper route? The brown spaces, the Chicano spaces that house the laborers, from the farmworkers to the driver of the street-sweeping truck, and where the great ash tree casts a different light, so too a different kind of shadow? I'm referring to the city witnessed in Montoya's poem "fresno, august '92," which reads:

> the brown boy lies dead spit slipping red
> from his mouth in bubbles to the dry cracked dust
> of the ground sucking it up like the juice
> of a stepped-on orange.

To find my way to the barrio streets, those left out of the annals of Fresno history, those unmentioned by the tourist pamphlets, though not forgotten in its demonizing newspaper headlines, I listen for the songs of the ice worker.

Indeed, the ice worker sings very sad songs. And in the embattled but spiritual world of Montoya's poetry, he comes across as a messenger, a Gabriel trumpeting the burdens of the working class. But he's more like a soul in purgatory if his mission is "to sing of the imminent return of justice." In fact it's what makes him more human than angel, more tragic than vainglorious: "no roses will fall from my eyes to bury you."

To misconstrue the elegant elegy of Montoya's tone as pessimism is to misunderstand the ice worker's poetics:

...mostly, he would steal the beats
and put in his own words about life,
about love, about dying.
this is how he became a poet
parting ways with the sad ocean
of ordinary speech.

It's called survival, muscle-twitching strength limned with hope, this act of inhabiting, not romanticizing, struggle and then articulating that existence with lyrics "to alleys and trash cans, / to ants and the crushed peach of their affection." It's not called complaint. Discontent means someone else—someone from the outside—has the power to change, appease or even fix the problems plaguing the displeased. But outrage means that the burden of change is everybody's: insider, outsider, brown, white.

Violence is one of those angers highlighted in Montoya's work. And though his poems tell the heartbreaking stories of Jesse and René, victims of the "corrupt hands" of cops who walk about "with their .357 smiles," and though the ice worker bemoans the loss of youth, the immediate targets of the street wars ("a maya warrior dies in the streets of fresno/ never realizing who he was"), he also holds the Chicano community accountable and subsequently calls upon the residents to search within, to strive for reflection and consciousness, the first step toward action:

and where raza are our heroes
the heroes of aztlán?

what became of that great nation we were going to build?
where did all the warriors go with their sharpened knives
and loaded rifles?

This "call to arms" is metaphorical of course, not literal. Montoya is not endorsing a coup d'état, though he's certainly demanding a "fight back." If the passion of the language unsettles us, then the work is accomplishing its task. Montoya's poems are not the static crime scene photographs or the quaint glimpses through the windows of the barrio—they are the shattering of glass, the gun shots, the shouting or the wailing that pierces through walls:

can you hear it now
life in the middle of it all
this field of dust and poison
and pain like a perfectly orchestrated song
whelping out its measure of silence?

Another important characteristic in Montoya's poems is his engagement of Christianity. There's as much Jesus in this book as there is in a Catholic church, but this Jesus, "a Murdered Man, the murdered king," is at times the sacrosanct provider of faith, and at others he's a humanized martyr susceptible to the derision of those who have lost their faith:

Christ came walking up blackstone avenue
and i dragged him into an alley
and spit in his face. he didn't say anything
and it pissed me off.

Or, even more dramatically, a victim of those who confuse a downtrodden Jesus for other disenfranchised peoples:

this is the silence of Christ beaten blue
and black on the scorching streets
of the city, Christ mistaken for a gangster
or thug or just another mojado moving
in on the precious property of "providence."

And just when it appears that the ice worker has reached the breaking point ("i'm just a chicano, an indian/ who sees life swallowed up in a dream and wants to implode") and about to succumb to despair ("something tearless/ bellows from my belly"), part IV comes along, slightly different in tone, with its dozen or so mentions of the word "love" or "lover," as if all along we have been ignoring that these poems are as much an homage to a city as they are an indictment. Reread the final poem in the book, "fresno night," and understand this, all of you, Fresno, its citizens, and readers whose eyes have come to see "the cold metal madness of this city": not all who enter here have abandoned hope.

This is Montoya's Fresno, a place in need of a spiritual cleansing by way of a Chicano revolution. But so too a place that deserves it. As do other places we inhabit that we both revile and adore. *the iceworker sings* shines a light on the city

in a troubled time, but this tension became the muse that pressured and prodded its poet to that dangerous space, what Federico García Lorca calls *el duende,* where artists risk everything to understand—and survive—their damaged world.

3. landscapes of sadness

Montoya (like Gary Soto) acknowledged the deceased poet Ernesto Trejo by including in his collection a poem in memoriam. In turn, Blas Manuel de Luna, in his book *Bent to the Earth,* includes a poem in memory of Andrés Montoya. I'm making a mental note of those Chicano writers who have passed recently, who have also been remembered, honored, celebrated by the many communities to which they belonged: Gloria Anzaldúa, Lalo Delgado, Corky Gonzales, Roxana Rivera. I don't dare go farther back, because this list—indeed this loss—is daunting. But grief is a part of the human condition. Every culture acknowledges it and employs ceremonies and symbols to allow entire groups of people to participate in a shared experience. No one bears the burden alone, though certainly each person must come to terms with it individually.

I've always been touched by descansos, those makeshift memorials on the sides of the roads or streets, usually a cross, flowers and a votive candle that give passersby notice to give respect: Somebody died here. I have come across many marking accident sites on the highways of México or in the Southwest. But so too have I seen them in Manhattan—in the center of Chelsea, no less, where a scaffold collapsed, killing a Mexican day laborer. In the Chicano neighborhoods these descansos take other shapes: the mural, the silkscreen t-shirt, the tattoo. And then, there is the descanso-poem.

The first time I came across the descanso-poem was in Thermal, California, where my family (19 of us) arrived from Michoacán in 1980. There were two distinct groups accessible to the youth: the farmworkers and the cholos, which was a very thin distinction since all of our fathers worked in the fields and our mothers in the packinghouses. And it took very little time for the farmworker boys, once they hit puberty, to adopt the chino pants and the hairnet. But there were some, like the recent immigrants already in adolescence or on the cusp of adolescence (i.e., my cousins and I), who didn't adopt that identity mainly because we didn't speak the language—English. And of all of us, it was me who picked it up, only because I didn't resist, nor was I resentful that I had been plucked from my familiar neighborhood to come here, to this sleepy little unexciting town that would not make national headlines until someone reproduced the Elvis stamp on

the exposed side of the post office many years later. And though there was always talk among the adults about going up north to Bakersfield, where I had been born, where the family toiled before we went back to México, we stayed put in the Coachella Valley.

A year later I could hold my own, navigating through English like a pro, though this was only useful in school or whenever some document came in the mail. Otherwise, Spanish was everywhere—at home, at the market, at the post office, at work. But the streets, which in the evenings were the domain of the young adults, were in English.

Being the shy kid that I was, I preferred to stay at home after sunset. The grown-ups warned us about the dangers "out there," with those cholos and their drugs and their violence. As evidence of that, they pointed out how the police were always patrolling the trailer park, where many of those cholos lived. We kids simply believed their words, which were proved right when we heard of a knife fight that left a young man dead.

The next day the school was a-buzz over the incident and many claimed to have witnessed the confrontation, providing exaggerated details as proof of it. And when word spread that there would be a vigil that night, my cousins and I seized on it, looking forward to participating in something exciting for a change.

Somehow three of us, the oldest males, made it out of the apartment that evening. Since Thermal was a small place, and we all knew where that trailer park was located, off we went, no doubt hoping to have our own tales to tell the next day at school. But what we came across surprised me. The gathering was somber and dignified, just like the funerals back in México, with nothing extraordinarily different or out of place. When some of the young men spoke, their voices were low, so the crowd had to remain hushed in order for all to hear. The speakers talked about El Tony, but they talked about themselves as well, as if this was the gift of El Tony's passing: the chance for anyone to participate and give themselves context, and to exercise the expression of voice in the language or sentiment shared with the person who no longer speaks.

My cousins were anxious to leave since it was clear that nothing explosive was going to happen, and just as we were about to step out of the gathering, a piece of paper was handed to me by a young woman in heavy make-up and teased hair—a chola with pencilled-in eyebrows. I looked at this piece of paper, a poem dedicated to El Tony, all of it written in calligraphy and centered on the page. Everyone clutched their keepsake respectfully, and so did I, taking it home with me and poring over it all night, trying to decipher what the poem meant, what it told me about El Tony, and about the poet who had been moved to inspiration.

How intimate this gesture, sitting down to remember, to envelop memory with metaphor, to give it texture by committing it to print, and then letting it go, watching it circulate as it relays its solemn message to other readers: Somebody died here. But the affection for that somebody continues.

For Chicano writers, the act of memorializing is essential. We have been doing this even before we started calling ourselves Chicanos. From the protest rallies to los encuentros at community centers, from El Teatro Campesino to Con Tinta, from the loose-leaf descanso-poems to the bound commemorative editions like this one, we remember, we don't forget, we write it down for ourselves and others. Memory means presence of history. History means we have a past, and most definitely a viable future. And the act of recognizing a fellow writer, one of our own, means we are a movement that has benefited from the contributions of those now gone, and that will continue its volition as long as those still living exercise the agency of language and voice.

I learned from those young people at the trailer park, if we don't remember each other, if we don't speak for ourselves in our own tongues, no one else will, because, cholos or Chicano writers, we are still relatively invisible, ignored, and, yes, deemed insignificant by the dominant groups. We risk erasure at every turn, even from our own communities, where we are also not read. I know these statements sound dramatic, but think about how many times our works appear on the shelves of the mainstream booksellers, or in college curricula outside of Chicano studies courses, or in the shortlists of book award nominations. Think about how the extent of knowledge from our young people usually doesn't extend beyond Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street.* When I expressed these concerns before, my friend Richard Yañez reminded me, "We have been here before all of those things and we will be here afterward." And he's right, but to secure that continuum, memory must be planted, nurtured, harvested.

Writers leave their legacy in print. Writers reach out, even after their deaths. Those epistolary poems of Montoya's, letters addressed to KB, Sarah, and Antonio, among others, are also letters to the general reader. Yes, letters to world, that sometimes never writes to us, as la Emily Dickinson once wrote. Nonetheless she wrote, and she is read, and she still exists.

Andrés Montoya is not dead; he is very much alive.

I never knew Montoya personally; I never had the chance. But I know his work, and I respect and admire it immensely. And having read (and reviewed) so many worthy books of poetry written by Chicanos and Latinos, I make the following declaration very much informed by what has been written and published in the past: in this generation, *the iceworker sings* should be known as

the finest book of poetry to come out of our community. It should receive even greater acclaim, but alas, as I have stated before, so much of what we write remains relatively unheard, marginalized, regionalized, and shrouded in silence. It is our responsibility that these works, and Montoya's especially, travel outside of our borders and that they do not stay silent.

I'd like to close this essay with Montoya's own words—not mine, not la Emily's—with a few of the many lines that have inspired many readers, including me, to keep up the good fight, to express anger, but also beauty, to celebrate the world we live in, and to imagine the world we want, to avoid complacency, and, above all to remember—to perform activism with ink:

> i will cry for resistance and struggle, for your song
> like the song of our murdered ancestors
> joining in the marrow of bones
> fire running though veins.

javier huerta

berkeley

HIDEOUS SONNET #2

*I would give you a star, a multitude**
of everburning white. For you I'd acquire
lightning sparks and their consequence: that you'd
be warmed by remnants of celestial fire.

I'd welcome you to our own lakeside cottage
with an always replenished supply of wood.
Together we'd join arm in arm and engage
in amorous conversation. Oh, I would

say, "Never again will I feel cold. Your gaze,
like lightning striking everything in reach,
has set my horrifying skull ablaze."
But don't expect such similes from a wretch

possessing only banishment and scorn,
a community of one and an armful of acorns.

*Andres Montoya. "Truly" in *The Ice Worker Sings and Other Poems.*

APT. 406, OAKLAND #4

I don't know anything of love.
I know about the bus schedule
—-Andrés Montoya

Mientras
te bañas busco

por el internet cómo

llegar
al Templo Masónico

donde esta noche cantará

Cesaria
Evora en un idioma

que no conocemos. La página

del tránsito
me informa

de varias opciones. BART,

claro, es
la forma más rápida.

Abro
la puerta del baño

(¿por qué, Maria, después de 467

días de vivir
juntos aún te cubres

los senos?) y te digo que para

alcanzar
el BART

a las 5:32 pm tenemos que

subirnos
al bus NL a las 5: 25.

Me dices
que pronto sales.

Y ya cuando sales he imprimido

horarios
y mapas.

Te aseguro que no nos vamos a perder.

Claro, no
sabía

en ese momento que las seis cuadras

que nos
tocaban

caminar estaban de subida.

paul lópez

imperial valley

THE ICEWORKER SINGS IMPERIAL VALLEY

I had just turned twenty-five and had accepted a spot as an adjunct instructor teaching composition at our local junior college. To say I was terrified is an understatement. I had no training to speak of, and the only experience I had was the dissipating memory of some of my old teachers in the classroom. I didn't sleep much the night before that first day; to be honest, I didn't sleep at all, involuntarily practicing my introduction to the course to a mirror deep into the a.m., pantomiming key points on the syllabus with my index finger, and to heighten the experience as all good teachers should, working myself up into a stammering crescendo as I pointed out the responsibility of the students to attend class consistently, if not religiously, for the betterment of their souls. Yeah, that's right. But that mirror reflected back a young brotha who obviously lacked the confidence to take the reigns of a classroom eager with waiting adults, students who had most likely worked all day and who needed nothing less than a person heading the class as confused as they were. What could I offer them? I tried to remember how my old instructors addressed their classes on the first day, but ended up imagining myself gliding into class on huaraches and tube socks like my statistics professor did one long and harrowing summer session just before he unleashed a flurry of formulas that twisted my mind up into square knots for months after I'd just squeaked by that course. Just thinking about it made me nauseous.

I knew if I ended up falling asleep that night, everything I had ever learned, all of the preparation leading up to the course would somehow ooze out my ear and encrust itself forever across my pillowcase. I had to stay awake.

* * *

I arrived early that first evening, about two hours. I figured I'd battle the nerves by thumbing through a few books at the campus library. I'd spent many hours there over the years, reading at least a hundred books alone as a seventeen and eighteen year old kid, which always seemed to calm me down before a big presentation or exam. Of course at the time, I had no idea that that would eventually lead me to a classroom years later to attempt to share some of that same literary magic with some of my own students. Spencer Library was also a good place to cool off, given that it was a September evening in the Imperial Valley. Temperatures usually peak between 106 and 108 degrees in early September, not to

mention the humidity that quickly factors in the moment a person steps out the front door.

As I walked through the stacks, I pulled books randomly from their shelves, revisiting old favorites and recognizing some of the marks I'd left on many of them years before. (One still had an old True Romance movie stub I used as a bookmark. I also found the copy of Vicente Huidobro's Selected Poems that was mildly stained from a Guinness Stout incident in Ensenada). If I remember correctly, I also grabbed Amiri Baraka's *The Dead Lecturer*, Frank O'Hara, Hart Crane, Henry Miller, Sylvia Plath, Kenneth Patchen, and several others I can't quite remember now. Didn't actually read them, though, just pulled them from their shelves nervously only to tuck them back in line without any real recollection of what I was doing. Lumbering through the stacks, I was a chicano zombie in Doc Marten's and a tie that was too tight, trying desperately to eliminate the fact that I was about to teach my first class in a couple of hours.

As I continued, however, I eventually came across a title that demanded my attention for more than its familiarity. Being that it was 108 degrees or so outside, the title alone seemed like the antidote for the heat that had been forking its sweaty teeth into our skin for over four months. The book's title was *The Iceworker Sings and Other Poems*. It had a black and blue cover with an interesting photograph that depicted a couple of men in what appeared to be a downtown alleyway, surrounded by signs that read in ominous, exclamatory statements, things like: "Repent! The revolution is at hand!" and "i betrayed like judas." I opened it and started to read. Andrés Montoya? How come I had never heard of him? On the back cover was his bio— it was his very first book, and sadly, he had already passed away. What? Who was this large, bespectacled dude from Fresno, California, birthplace of my father and grandfather?

After reading a few short lines, I was immediately intoxicated by the speaker's voice, greedily reciting the poet's language to myself, as if it meant everything to do so. Montoya's voice was fearless, one that saw far ahead of itself like an antenna registering signals from some distant level of consciousness, using language that was simple and uninterrupted. And what courage to question the Great Homeboy in the sky! What audacity to emphatically demand answers as if standing bare-chested at the edge of a rooftop, arms stretched, demanding God to "have mercy / on la raza and los pobres!"

That night, in that library, Montoya's poetry beat a series of tattoos into my flesh. Phrases like "saying prayers, asking for the blessing / of Christ to come down like a jackhammer / breaking us all to pieces," rose on my skin like yeast. Believe it or not, there are many people out there who still believe that worthy

poetry is an academic word game that must always ascertain some level of erudition for a select few, or that verses must speak in enigmatic utterances meant only to be untangled over a cup of hot tea at a hip city café. Olvídate! Montoya's work screams. His poetry is real, about real people, beautiful but imperfect, sometimes even broken, questioning their existence while living through circumstances as dark and as turbulent as the Bering Sea. In my hands that night was a poet who wasn't afraid of emotion.

After reading several poems, I realized I had to get to class. With the nerves finally slain, or at least distracted, I raced across campus fueled by verses I could barely contain, like that rare feeling one experiences after interacting with something wild and alive.

When I finally got to the classroom, there were about eighteen students waiting for me. There were only twelve on my official roster, which meant I was going to have to determine how many were missing and how many were either waitlisted or needed to crash. I should've done this immediately, but I couldn't keep the work to myself much longer. I drew in a long breath, pulled the book out of my bag, opened it and said: "You all gotta hear this." Then prefacing the poem with something ridiculous and unintelligible, I'm sure, probably even melodramatic, I read "star struck—" it was the first poem I read in the library. "i would step out / into the night / into the alley, where the ants / savored the crushed / anguish of a peach." Reading this, my mind levitated, as if the rooftop was opening up for us, the stars, the moon, all of us in that room going at it together. When I finished the poem, silence enveloped the room like the long and excruciating pause that comes just before the verdict. But while fumbling through the book to find another poem before I'd be forced to speak, I heard a young guy at the back of the room exhale a long and inspired "damn." And that's what did it. Our semester was on its feet and running. Students commented on the geography of the poem: the fields and ditches, the wide, blue sky; basically, how much it resembled our valley. One person commented on the poem's conclusion that reads, "I could find the cold love / of earth beneath my back / and God smiling, / making promises / from the sky." She expressed that it was hopeful, and to her, it meant that God would always take care of the heartache and confusion in due time. Then another student added: "This is exactly how I felt a while back." The class was enlivened; I couldn't get them to quiet for the next poem. Many expressed how utterly confusing poetry had always been in school, and how this was somehow different. A voice, many believed, that finally spoke for them.

Eventually, I read "truly," and after that one, an older man sitting in front of me asked for the title and author again, intensely scribbling the names into his notebook. Needless to say, we spent most of the hour talking about Montoya's poetry. I even had to review the policy statement and syllabus the following week.

Everyone stayed that evening; not one person was turned away. Luckily I didn't get into any serious trouble that night, because that's when we're supposed to tailor our official rosters based on who shows and who doesn't, who will be dropped, and exactly how many students will be added to the class in order to satisfy everyone in administration. Inevitably, everything is eventually reduced to numbers; but at that moment, poetry, and more specifically, Andrés Montoya, is what broke the ice on that first and fateful night for a young teacher and his students in the Imperial Valley.

david dominguez

visalia

A LETTER TO ANDRÉS MONTOYA

"So my gente can live like gente with honor."
—Andrés Montoya

40.1% = Percentage of Hispanics, 18 years and over, who do not graduate from high school.

10.8% = Percentage of Hispanics, 18 years and over, with a bachelor's degree or higher.

— U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Because I want my people to live like people with honor, I write this letter, my friend. Where I teach, the kids come from packing houses and fields. They sit in the classroom with peach fuzz caught in their eyelashes and with grape knives stuffed in their back pockets. Why more mothers don't say, "Practice your English, *mijo*," until it flows from their mouths like ribbons, I'll never know. Why more mothers don't say, "You're going to go to college and be somebody, *mijo*," I'll never know. But I know too many of my people fail high school and that girls have babies with boys who don't want to be fathers or husbands. Poverty. I see it scribbled up and down the country roads. I see it spray painted on irrigation pipes, stop signs, lamp posts, curbs, and even on the walls of Colony Covenant Church. Some of my people let the peach fuzz boil in their eyes until they redden and ooze like rotten fruit, and they yell, "I've had it with the packing houses"; others let the grape-knife blades dig into their spines until they feel like crushed spiders, and they, too, yell, "I've had it with the fields." Gather them, my friend, the way a spirit gathers the scent of orange blossoms. Cook them a pot of beans and dice the tomatoes, jalapeños, and cilantro growing in my backyard and spread *pico de gallo* across the tops of their bowls. Give them *queso ranchero*, and then, tell them to share their words. Tell them to carry a pencil, a notepad, and a book under their arms, to tuck the books carefully as if they were photographs of their only loved ones, and to let the loved ones be themselves so that they might live with honor, not lost behind spray paint merciless as barbed wire rusting in the rain.

THERE WENT UP A STREAM FROM THE EARTH, AND IT WATERED THE WHOLE FACE OF THE GROUND

i could find the cold love
of the earth beneath my back
and god smiling,
making promises
from the sky.
—Andrés Montoya

Sunday evening in August and spurge has invaded the basins
under my fruit trees, and now the nectarines
are demanding that I rid them of the weeds not by hula hoe
but by plucking them out so the seeds
parish in the green trash can beside my gate.
I'm ashamed, for the tree has fulfilled
the promises made by its blooms, but somehow,
I've still forgotten to tend to my yard,
which feeds me cucumber salad for lunch
and for dinner basil-sweetened marinara sauce featuring
lemon boy, goliath, black prince, Roma,
Zapoteca, and Mr. Stripy tomatoes—
all of them produced by my yard that has become
overrun by aphids, white fly, ants,
and rotten fruit fermenting on the ground.
"How has life come to this," I joke,
but I'm also working as I lean over the dirt.
The muscles in my lower back want
to tie themselves into knots, but I go,
pulling out spurge by the bottom stem so that not
a speck of dust falls from the roots,
appeasing my heart overcome by the guilt of neglected chores
the way the weeds have overtaken the trash bin
that I have flipped open and left beside me
so I'm not alone in the early dark
where the dirt is now clean, where I rake the soil,
where now my dogs Buck and Moby

are with me and rolling on their backs under a Sequoia,
so I turn on the hose and let it fill
the basin under their tree, and now they are
digging in the mud and dunking their heads, and the mud
is honey dripping from their jowls—
their eyes reflecting nothing but ecstasy.
I take the hose and rinse the dust off of the nectarine leaves
until they shine under the moonlight,
drop the hose, let it fill the basin, and listen to water falling on water.
Under the nectarine tree the air is clean and cold,
and still there is the sound of water
falling on water, and suddenly I'm not myself: I'm not
the spurge, I'm not my yard being eaten alive by bugs, I'm not
my truck that needs an oil change,
this month's $800.00 gas and electric bill,
the ulcerated malignant tumor that invaded my dog's paw,
or my wife's chronic migraines—
I'm wet leaves dripping into a basin brimming with hose water,
I'm sound rising up and touching the stars.

marisol teresa baca

fresno

ELEGY

I want to grip their eyes and rattle
them open like you did once

in the cemetery of a bookstore—
a prolonged and continuous singing, screaming,

"Jesus, why have you forsaken me?"
You were salt of the earth and heavy with it.

You came from nowhere,
some vision of Borges'
hallucination in the foggy morning, melting.

The sun is orange as an orange, remaining
after picking. I was a child of the fog.

And you knew your plangent song
of the word would bring you close
as breath to the sun.

Dreaming and writing and living,
tell me,
where will I be going next?
Is it our exile, or the return
that I must tell the story of?

There are still those forgotten,
the streets and motels in Fresno,
the salt scorn printed and televised daily.

What is left to us,
a legacy of finding bones in the dust?
No, Andrés,
you gave us the salt to consume
the frozen. The romantic language
of Neruda, Salinas; the tears and love of men.

THE HORNO

[for my father]

Mud mound, size of a cellar, one September the cupola
was built up, a mixture of clay and straw stalks from Grandpa's dark blue
Ford Pickup. Red heap it looked like, in the distance.

Here is my father's body moving over the frame of the kiln
so that after time it begins to resemble an ant hill, a dark tunnel is dug out below
for smoking freshwater trout which the men catch in the rivers and lakes.

It takes days to let the bricks settle and dry. I count fox tails
and stomp in the marsh beside the alfalfa fields. Mother is on the creamsicle phone,
she has orders. The crib is now much too small for me.

Horno in the rain is deep red. I rubbed my hand over it and the side bled
purple like blackberries. Inside, with frozen peas in my mouth I watch dad making
the final bricks, the sun has changed him to a horse, no undershirt, hair black
and long like Jesus is, in photos.

Dad bought ducks in the winter. Mom started to tell stories to Grandpa,
I followed the ducks into the furnace and fell asleep. Snow covered,
it became a hilly shadow which stretched at noon, gloomy and long.

Clouds same color as the inside of that thing. Smoke painted the walls in ash.
Feathers left over, and over from the ducks. They disappeared after months.
I didn't cry when they were gone. I had new interests, a thaw that made the
grasses crackle, cherry blossoms, crickets.

He used to smoke trout in it, my father, Magdalena. I am praying to you.
I have fallen asleep in the old horno again. Trout in lakes and rivers. The
smoke in wisps along the road, long trails of feathers beside the fields, lakes,
and rivers, the trout inside the rivers.

ramón garcía

los angeles

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD TRAIN

Train tracks
traverse suburban flat land
dotted with the San Joaquin Valley's
abandoned factories.

Silence is interrupted
by the train's churning
into the soundlessness...

It is winter in California.
In other states of the Republic the falling snow
brightens the night of a freezing season.
Here, the fog moves in the snowless dark
going nowhere. It stays close to
the earth, as if pulled to it.

The fog makes driving dangerous:
it consumes headlights, obscures parking lots.

As the sound of the train's whistle recedes,
the silence is suspended and then released
back into itself.

Working people are home.
Inside the heated tract houses the air is greasy with fried food.
Televisions are on: laugh tracks, foreign wars,
music videos, police in Los Angeles making arrests.

The stiff elms are burnt by autumn's mild mendacious cold.
The churches are empty.

The train has gone deep into the fog.
Another train whistle will sound in five hours, like a slight lament,
and won't be heard again tonight except by those up late,
the insomniacs. The train's passing doesn't penetrate sleep.

MOTHER VISITS

At home, life's dispersed by others.
At home, her life is what it's always been:
Children, Dad, her parents, work and more work—
She's older now, tired, of failing health.
She's come to get away, to visit, to escape.

I take her to Chinatown and she buys yams and a tea set.
She tells me white yams are better and harder to find than the red ones.
She cooks the yams with brown sugar,
Makes yerba buena tea and serves it in the new tea cups.
She's content just to be with me and I enjoy her company.

She is herself, as she never is at home;
In her tranquil face the simple pleasures of the moment are
Visitations of forgetting, the uncomplicated grace
Behind which is God and her love of me,
Wrapped up in her love of my siblings.
She is grateful for what she has, for what I give her,
Which is nothing, the nothing of a son's love for his mother.

From inside her Calvin Klein purse, she takes out the clipped photograph
Of abueltio published in the obituary section of the *Modesto Bee* after he died.
She shows me the newspaper clipping,
Smiles, says she always carries it with her.
I realize she thinks about him still, and that she always will.

At the Greyhound station, I stand on the platform and watch her sit inside
The bus, its engine on.
On her face, grace is now mingled with worry and loneliness,
With leaving and returning,
Her father's death, her mother's oldness.
I wave goodbye and she blows a kiss as the bus backs up.
My spirit has inherited part of her, the part that's going away.

TAKING A WALK

I walk to my grandmother's in the winter afternoon.
Modesto is sunless and gray, California cold.

I am the sole walker of the suburban sidewalks,
a solitary eccentric doing an eccentric thing—
walking in the open day,
in the sharp air, enjoying the mild coldness
taming my boredom.

There is not much to see:
lawns and wide streets,
tract houses sunk in their private, obscure,
American dreams, American tragedies,
American gluttonies.

People peer at me from behind kitchen and living room windows,
from inside cars breaking at STOP signs.
They wonder why I'm walking, what I'm doing.

The Modesto public buses are almost empty.
The bus drivers don't bother to stop at bus stops,
since there is no one to pick up.

This walking could almost be called joy,
expansiveness.
The minor ecstasy of being released from
the confining comforts of the house where Mom's
posole steams the windows.

Grandma, who walked the streets of the
Coalcoman of her youth, lives a mile from my parents' house.
I pass her house without stopping,
walking in that open dream no one cares to walk.
I'll keep walking a bit longer and then turn back.
She doesn't understand my pleasure, the Modesto streets are
lifeless, they are not the streets of the pueblos she once knew.

daniel a. olivas

los angeles

LETTERS TO NORCO

My letters to Norco
kept you sane you said.

Three years there for
selling meth. But I
wrote to you so you
wouldn't forget me.

And you wrote back.
Beautiful and sad letters.
Strong letters. But the
third one scared me
and then made me mad.
You told me that you
rented my letters
to your homies for a
quarter so they could
beat off to my sex-filled
longings where I told
you what my mouth could
do to your body and what
I wanted you to do to me.
But then I wasn't so mad.
And the thought of your
friends getting off from
my words made me smile.
So I made each new letter
even better, hotter than
the last. And when you
wrote back and told me
your homies loved my
words and that you could
charge thirty-five cents
now, I laughed at my
power.

And on your release day
as we stood in the August
heat outside the tall fence,
you held me and whispered
into my hair that we should
get married as soon as we
could and have lots of babies.
And you said my letters kept
you sane. And I said, me too,
mi amor. Me too.

PICO BOULEAVARD, OCTOBER 1972

On Pico Boulevard it is hot, too hot, and smoggy
for October as bodies, large and small, stream out
of St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

¡Ay Dios mío! That priest, that priest! says Mrs.
Fonseca. He cannot speak Spanish worth a damn!
When are we going to get a Mexicano to say mass?

The stray, yellow dog barks near the votive candles
looking for attention and the children laugh as
they run to the empty lot three blocks down and
two over. Shit, Alfredo! Stay away from me, you
pendejo! I'm gonna' kick yo' ass, you pinche pendejo!
Alfredo throws a stone anyway and laughs hard.

Adriana, I understand your pain! My first grandbaby
came before the wedding, too! But it will be fine.

The siren shrieks as the gleaming red fire engine
streaks down the bustling street towards black smoke.

Come on, Mirabel. I love you, es la verdad! You can't
question that. But I've waited long enough, haven't I?

The siren is far now, at its destination, firemen
helping the helpless, another tragedy confronted.

Fifteen thousand dollars! Can you believe it!
in one fucking year! Selling this shit will keep
me in dinero better than any pinche college
degree. Hear me, Simón? Better than any pinche
Harvard. What? Shit, man. Don't give me that!
I've got it wired, man. Wired. Hear me? Wired!

Feet hurt, too much perfume, rattling noise: honks,
laughter, coughing, cussing, cooing, church bells.

Mi amor, what do you mean? You have my heart,
you know that! My heart! Believe me. I am not
lying to you. You are a wonderful husband, mi amor,
the best, es la verdad. I love you, mi amor. I do.

On Pico Boulevard it is hot, too hot, and smoggy
for October as bodies, large and small, stream out
of St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

sheryl luna

denver

ORGAN FAILURE

When my grandfather drew his last breath
he turned to my mother's pink face—her beehive
prom-hair. He whispered fire, "There's no such thing
as a friend mijita." His heart then gave out.

And life is like his heart, all fat, all grease,
pink flush, love-hate. He was raised on menudo
tripe and burned tortillas.iends swarmed him.
Their honey need forever hurt him before the stings,
before he lost his soul in their factories.

He sold grapefruits in a wooden stand;
his daughters sold eggs along dusty streets.
And I am learning the hero's dry soul,
the way hot sand darkened the streaks of his tears.
How he'd curse the wasps. My sister stung
on the cheek, running, wailing. An image transfixed,
was it all foreshadow?

It is how a hand reached forth in full youth draws back,
how some dogs run themselves thin believing in the win.
Does age make us brittle? Is it mostly the poor
who grow cranky as unsoaped leather?

Was it beauty? Adonis' blood flowering the snow?
When my friend's liver gave out she had grown thin
and selfish as any drone! How death carries a fifth-
grade pout, and the body cramps half-glorious.

The poor buy their way to aloneness.
I can hear the organs give out in rooms
where white walls echo as sea-shells.
Nurses scurrying to some future jet-plane vacation.
And the body a shell of liquid, swells, sways,
forgets to know.

To turn an ear, forgive a world afraid?
Her body grows cold. To give a melody
of yellow roses, a poem, my breath, only
then would I shy to hold a thinning body.
I am, as it is, too young and arrogant
to forgive or know.

dave hurst

clovis

THE COCKROACH PEOPLE

cucarachas
gente de la cucaracha
alive like cockroaches
sobreviviendo como esto
proud like cockroaches, *ese*

lupe avoids my eyes
as she tap tap taps her key
on the door of 410: *housekipping*
she calls, the same as the others
spread out down the hall—

the same across the city spread out
at conventions and concerts and casual tourist
dives and blocks of flats, hotels,
condos, b&b's, luxury suites, motels:
blueprint visions of hallways

everywhere, a door-tapping
chorus of invisible people
cleaning and vacuuming and wadding
stained sheets into canvas bags,
wiping spit and snot from sinks,

and swabbing the shit-marks
from white toilets and sometimes
scurrying those stupid goddamn
sanitized paper strips across the lid.

IN THE MOVEMENT OF LEAVES, VOICES

in the movement of leaves, voices
shimmer like green sequins of memory,
they are like the elegant sound of whispers,
snatches of conversation from passers-by.

i can never hear them fully, but i feel
them brush against my coat. one of them
is surely my sister, many years dead,
but the loudest, especially in spring rains

under the grey lens of dusk when her hair
streams down the smooth bark
of the crepe myrtle. she bangs limbs
against the roof when the wind calls.

the other whispers are restless, impermanent,
returning gypsies. half-lives i regret.
sometimes they cast spells, shimmer in
nearly motionless shadows. their faces

gape from patterns of light on the wall.
i know their call, their sibilant rustle,
though none of them are speaking
to me, not even my sister.

ii

when i lived in san francisco
i once donned headphones during lunch
down in the financial district. i sat on a planter

at market and battery, and it was all block and glass
above crowds of diffuse, hazy people moving
in and out of focus where the concrete canyons

eroded into the rhythm of the human flood.
the world of air became moments, like leaves
of shifting faces, merging, undulating

immersed in the music
the way light sparkles from waves
or filters through treetops.

iii

now, i am a corpus of ghosts and the trees
are full of grackles. i can't close the window

when it rains. none of the cupboards
open. my hands pass through.

the closer i come to hearing
the less of me there is to listen.

WHITESBRIDGE RD.

barefoot children
stare out from
grey chainlink fences
amid windblown
trash, their tenement
hovels strewn with
crude handlettered ads:
bate *wurms*
garg sale

the gaunt, angular men
i glimpse sidelong
follow me with impassive eyes
from failed porches.

an old drive-in
movie screen lists sadly
over rusting memories,
tumbleweeds
and dust.

small hope plots,
green with lettuce and longbean,
give way and fade
into grapes
and further,
into the crisp tended lines
of cash crops,
corn and cotton,
corporate farms.

craig santos perez

el cerrito

ASTRONOMY

he called the night
sky *"halom*
tano" (deep jungle) nationless
stars: lands
that cannot be stolen –
he explained our geographic
position in the pacific
war and of the indiscernible
darkness
within its boundary –
how our ancestors
burned star patterns on
cave walls – ritual,
mnemonic. dying as
navigation: words suffocated
into prayer.
"gualaffon," he said (the moon
completed).
"i pas para hita"

SCULPTURE

during occupation
he was taken
from school to
work the stone
quarry.
was only fed rice
and sun.
his brother beheaded
for refusing.
bones of the dead
into spears. words
as hair threaded to
bridge
the pacific

james espinoza

fresno

CHASING PANCHO

I've been chasing Pancho Villa. It might be a doomed endeavor; Pancho made a name out of not getting caught. But I'm not after Pancho the man, a historical account of the rebel leader in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. I'm after Pancho the Chicano myth. I chase the Pancho of the poster I hung in my college dorm, the Pancho I wore on a T-shirt. He's mounted on a horse, cloud of dust billowing from earth, criss-crossed bullets on his chest, horse rein in his left hand, sombrero tilted skyward, and a full mustache hanging from his upper lip.

I chase the Pancho of rumor reflected in the voice of Edgar, a Chicano student of mine who on the first day of class, for an ice breaker activity, answers the following question: If you could meet anybody, dead or alive, who would it be?

"Pancho Villa," Edgar says. And I ask why.

"Umm . . . I don't know . . . he was real interesting, you know?"

I think I know, or at least, I want to know. So I chase Pancho, and at times, I feel Pancho chases me. When you've been thinking about something, anything, the world keeps bringing it up, reminding you of the chase. The other day, I'm making copies in the English department office when a Chicano colleague and I start to chit chat about too many papers to correct. And the conversation out of nowhere turns to Pancho. He tells me his grandmother, a teenager at the time, was walking on a dusty, Mexican road when a horse-backed Pancho tried to kidnap her.

Yes, this is Pancho too. I've heard he was a womanizer, a bandit, a pillager, a vengeful killer with the temper of a wasp nest, the kind of man who once, suspecting a group of ninety women were sympathizers of the enemy, lined them up like dominos and ordered them to be shot.

I'm not blind to this Pancho, even repulsed by him, but I follow hoof tracks beyond fame or infamy and into legend; I chase the Pancho that intrigues a student named Edgar, the Pancho that emerges in the copy room of an English department office; I chase Pancho the time-traveler, the anachronism, the border-crosser.

*

I chase Pancho to Olympic Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles. It's 1970-something. I'm not born yet. I only know this story because I follow Pancho here, follow him on the back of words *mi abuelita* speaks.

She wakes earlier than usual. This morning she will open the garment factory she has worked at for years, doing the kind of work hidden from the public's eye, crouched behind a sewing machine in the glow of yellow lamps. *Mi abuelita* was given the keys because the owner's son, a cop, was shot earlier that week, and now he lies in a hospital bed. The owner deems my grandmother one of her best workers. She's always on time, never misses work, sews with speed and precision, with fingers as graceful as a pianist's. So she receives the keys, and these keys will be a decoy, serve as a prop for coincidence, the kind of luck that makes survival possible when living outside the law. And *mi abuelita* is an outlaw, though I'm sure she didn't look like one. By then she was already showing signs of her age—missing teeth, a blind eye, and wrinkle after wrinkle on her face. But *mi abuelita*—who one day will walk me to school, buy me baseball cards at the corner market, stroke my head for me to go to sleep—is an outlaw. She's an outlaw of circumstance, a Mexican with no documentation to work or live in the United States.

When *mi abuelita* arrives at the factory building that morning, she doesn't pay attention to the immigration vans. All kinds of vans are always parked by the factory. They transport bundles of collarless shirts and pocketless pants to mothers who sew out of their homes. Some of the other vans take dresses to ritzy department stores. And then there are the vans of the plumbers who unclog the building's toilets.

Of course, *mi abuelita* has heard of *la migra* before. She has been in the United States for a while, and *migra* stories bounce around the neighborhood like a ball of *masa* in the hands of a *tortillera*. *La migra* is the reason Arturo, my father's friend from East L.A., never came home one day from a stroll down Broadway. *La migra* is the reason Gloria refuses to take her kids to Disneyland. And *la migra* spills from the lips of reporters every evening on the Spanish-language news.

Mi abuelita has heard the stories but has missed the details—the avocado color of the vans, how to tell the difference between a regular cop and a *migra* cop, what to say or do if *la migra* crosses your path. Perhaps it's better this way, to be unaware you're being chased, to leave your fate in the kind of fortune that makes folkloric heroes out of men like Pancho Villa.

*

Pancho's life on the run commences at the age of sixteen when he kills a man. Pancho is from the peasant class, and the man he kills is a rich land owner, a good

enough reason to bolt into the treacherous landscape of northern Mexico. It is here Pancho learns to live off arid land, where every path, rock, and tree becomes second nature. It is here Pancho the bandit emerges, where the legend of a Robin Hood who rustles cattle and horses and stages robberies is born. It is here where the real Pancho Villa, a fellow bandit, is killed, and Doroteo Arango dons his name. The man who was Doroteo becomes Pancho, and this name change will only be the first of many clever transformations. To be an outlaw, to survive when the odds claim otherwise, identity must dress in camouflage.

And it is also here, in northern Mexico, that Pancho joins the revolutionary movement spreading across the land in the early twentieth century. The revolution begins with the ousting of Porfirio Díaz, the dictator who has ruled Mexico for thirty years, pummeling the masses into poverty while serving foreign interests and landowners. And now it is here, in Pancho's rise up the military ranks, that I find a story about the role of luck when living on the fringes of society.

Pancho and his men have been fighting in northern Mexico, and in one of his raids to supply his campaign, he steals a horse of the finest kind. For whatever reason, his superior demands the horse be returned to the owner. When Pancho refuses, he is captured and sentenced to death for insubordination. Pancho's account of the ordeal is later captured too. He will say it is the only time he felt certain of death. Indeed, death is seconds away. The firing squad orders him to face a wall. He kneels and asks not to be blindfolded, to see his death in all its beauty and ugliness. I see it all happening like in a movie—the soldiers lifting their rifles in unison, a sad song coming to a climax, a close-up on Pancho's stoic demeanor, his gaze lost deep in the wall he faces.

And as he hears the order of "Aim," a soldier gallops in with a pardon. Pancho will live another day. He will live to wage his revolution.

*

I chase Pancho back to downtown L.A., 1970-something. *Mi abuelita* steps out of an RTD bus, the second she has taken to reach the garment district. In one hand she carries a brown paper bag. Inside, the bean burrito she will eat for lunch cools. With her other hand, she pokes through her purse, searching for the keys that will open the door to the seventh floor. The factory building is multi-storied, each floor leased by a separate owner. *Mi abuelita* walks into the lobby of the building like every other morning, thinking of collars and cuffs, of roaring sewing

machines, of the Cuban cup of coffee she orders from Mike, the Korean cafeteria owner.

But this morning is not like the others. This morning an odd silence consumes the lobby and a look of concern lasers from Mike's eyes. This morning the chase rages on the ninth floor.

I've heard many stories of immigration raids, from *mi amá* and *apá*, from my aunts and uncles, from a random stranger buying a *torta* at a taco truck. I figure the raid *mi abuelita* walked into that morning wasn't all that different.

A few minutes before she enters the building, someone on the ninth floor yells, "*La migra*! *La migra*!" And everyone runs and scatters like ants caught in the shadow of a foot. I picture them hiding anywhere they can—in bathroom stalls, among the racks of plastic-covered shirts, between the rolls of fabric. They hold their breaths, mimic the mannequins they use to measure the clothes they sew. Perhaps they pray to the patron saints of the small towns they abandoned to work in *El Norte*. Perhaps they think of the sons and daughters and wives and husbands who will worry later that evening when they fail to show up at home. Either way, seconds later, immigration officers barge into a ninth floor with rows of abandoned Singer machines, demanding to speak to a supervisor on duty, yanking on brown arms and legs that clutch with all their might to an American existence. They will plead and holler, but it will be worthless.

Meanwhile, *mi abuelita* doesn't even need to order her customary cup of coffee from Mike. He knows she wants the Cuban with no cream and no sugar. It's been like that ever since she started working there.

"*La migra* is here," Mike tips her with a Spanish he has perfected throughout the years. "Whatever you do, don't run. Just play along with me, ok?"

An immigration officer approaches from the elevator and walks by the cafeteria. Mike says to *mi abuelita*, "So you didn't forget your keys today, did you Mrs. Hernandez?"

"Oh no, I got them right here," *mi abuelita* answers, dangling the keys in front of her, the immigration officer looking away unsuspectingly.

"Have a good day," the immigration officer says.

Then *mi abuelita* takes the elevator to the seventh floor, two ceilings away from Mexicans and Salvadorians and Chinese being handcuffed with plastic bands.

*

If Pancho was a marked man by the age of sixteen, he became an international fugitive when he crossed the U.S./Mexico border and raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico. The cause for the raid has been disputed greatly by historians. Some argue it was a stupid outburst, spearheaded by Pancho's hot head after an arms trade gone awry. Others claim he wanted to punish the United States for supporting a rival faction of the revolution. Still others say he attacked the U.S. either to draw them further into the conflict and gain support of the masses or to send a message that no foreign intervention would be tolerated in the revolution. Whatever the case, Pancho's raid on Columbus has gone down in oral tradition as the underdog taking on a giant. The shame of the loss of the Southwestern states to the U.S. during the Mexican American War was fresh in memory, along with the recent U.S. invasion of the port city of Veracruz and discontent with U.S. support of the oppressive dictator Porfirio Díaz.

Pancho's men plunged into a sleeping Columbus on the eve of March 9th, ransacking the town and looting. The raid lasted two hours and resulted in the death of nine Americans. Needless to say, the U.S. government was infuriated. President Woodrow Wilson, echoing the sentiment of popular opinion, called for the capture of Pancho. In this way, one of the most notorious chases in U.S. history began, the Punitive Expedition. Units of the Seventh, Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Cavalry; two batteries of the Sixth Field Artillery; trucks; motorcycles; six airplanes; and 4,175 animals were lead by General John J. Pershing on the manhunt. Rewards were offered for any information on Pancho. And just as thirsty for his blood were the opposing Mexican troops Pancho had been fighting in the revolution.

I read about this for a report I wrote on Pancho for my eleventh grade U.S. History class. Like Edgar, the college student I would encounter many years later as a teacher, I too had developed a fascination with Pancho. After all, Pancho was the only Spanish-surnamed presence in our textbook. So when our teacher assigned a biographical essay, I chased Pancho through the school and city libraries, gathering bits and pieces of a life that was beginning to sound all too familiar.

*

When I was eight years old, I remember waiting for *mi amá* to return from a vacation in México. She had been visiting her family in Guadalajara after years of contact only through telephone calls and letters. When I had talked to her on the

phone earlier that week, she told me she had bought me gifts. She talked of Mexican candy, the kind they sold at the *carnicería*, the kind that was both chile hot and sugar sweet. She talked of a *guayabera*, a gold necklace with a cross pendant, black boots, and a costume for Halloween. She talked of aunts and uncles and cousins I had never met. She had pictures of them too. And she had stories to tell me, stories about a land I had only heard of, a land I had only imagined, a land that only existed in *novelas* and Spanish-language movies—plazas with colonial architecture, marketplaces with *huaraches* and *sarapes*, vendors on cobble-stoned streets who wrapped bacon on the hot dog wieners. And she talked about missing me, about wanting to give me a big hug. I missed *mi amá* too. I had never gone that long without seeing her.

The afternoon she was supposed to return, we received a phone call. *Mi apá* was already waiting at the LAX for her flight. *Mi abuelita* picked up the phone. After she hung up, I was told *mi amá* wasn't coming home. *Mi abuelita* said *mi amá* had decided to extend her vacation. I didn't question it. After so many years of not seeing her family, it seemed natural she would want to spend more time with them.

At that age, I didn't know anything about *la migra* or borders, and illegal aliens were creatures from far away galaxies. I didn't know my mother couldn't see her family whenever she wanted. I didn't know that that evening at the airport she was interrogated in a cubicle, her luggage rummaged through for clues she had been living in the United States for years now, evidence to confirm she was married with a family, that she wasn't the single woman depicted on her old tourist visa. I didn't know the immigration officer told her: "I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do. I don't know why you even tried to go to México. You're marked in the system now. Don't do anything foolish like trying to cross back over."

I didn't know these things because every day at school I placed my right hand on my heart and pledged allegiance to a flag of red, white, and blue. I was a Dodgers and Lakers fan. I watched Saturday morning cartoons in English. I listened to Michael Jackson on the radio. My parents had told my sister and me we were all Americans. They said the talk about people being deported had nothing to do with us. I didn't know all along *mi familia* was being chased, that *mi amá* didn't come home from her vacation because she was forced onto a plane back to Guadalajara.

And I didn't know that two days after *mi amá* had been deported, she stood in front of a chain link fence dividing Tijuana from the U.S. She listened to *coyotes*, smugglers, giving final instructions. They said crossing through the hills meant

playing a seesaw game. If the Mexican border patrol was sighted, they had to crawl through one of the fence's holes to the American side. If the American border patrol came into view, then it was back to the Mexican side. If she was caught, she should deny knowing them, pretend they were also immigrants. They emphasized that being caught by the Americans was better than being caught by the Mexicans. The Mexican border patrol, they said, was ruthless.

In the darkness of a slit-mooned sky, they crossed back and forth, crawling up hills belly-down like soldiers, only to roll down at the sound of barking dogs or scouring search lights. It was like this until two in the morning, when the *coyotes* finally decided *mi amá* didn't stand a chance at crossing the border that night.

*

How Pancho eluded the Punitive Expedition has been the basis for exaggeration, adding to the aura of Pancho as a cunning man with the survival instincts of a beast. His knowledge of the rough terrain certainly was an advantage, as was the sympathy of the Mexican people and Pancho's mastery of guerrilla tactics. Yet many historians argue the Punitive Expedition was simply flawed from the outset, plagued by incompetent leadership, lack of government communication, and so on. I, however, like to believe the version I remember writing on my eleventh grade report. I like to believe the testaments of Pancho's men who said they would often travel parallel to General Pershing's pursuing force, shielded only by the glare of the sun.

And I like to believe the story about Pancho being trapped on all flanks by the American troops, destined to be captured. I like to believe the ingenious Pancho broke from his persona of brawn and devised a risky plan, that he shed his revolutionary gear and dressed like the people his revolution claimed to represent—the downtrodden peasant. I like to believe a disguised Pancho walked right through the American troops and into the cover of the open land he knew so well.

I suppose it could have happened—maybe in Guerrero, where a Pancho wounded in the leg by Mexican troops had to be escorted out by his men; or maybe in the ranch at San Borja, where it is said American troops came closest to a cooped-up Pancho. Or maybe those historians are right, and the story about a disguised Pancho making fools out of the most powerful army in the world is nothing more than a fabrication, a fabrication that nonetheless rings true to Chicanos like me, who grew up in households among outlaws.

What I can say for sure is that *it* happened in Tijuana. In some shack on the outskirts of that border town, a beautician styled *mi ama's* hair and applied make-up so she would look like the picture of a woman on a stolen green card. For hours, *mi amá* practiced saying her new name, her new birthday, her new address. Then she got in line at the border, presented the green card to an immigration officer working a booth, and walked into America, right under the nose of the law.

*

In the summer of 1998, I drive north on Highway 85 in Arizona. Only road asphalt splits desert sand. Sage, cacti, and branchy bushes add dry grays and greens to the gold of old México. Heat waves in the horizon distort the landscape like fun house mirrors. A road sign catches my eye; it's yellow with three black figures running, holding hands, chasing America while America chases them. Caution, the sign warns: outlaws bolt from dry brush onto highway.

Mi apá rests in the backseat, nursing a last night of vacationing at Puerto Peñasco. *Mi amá* sits passenger, turns to speak to *mi apá*, and notices a light green SUV following us, the third since crossing the border half an hour ago. I guess the chase continues, though *la migra* is much too late. After hours of waiting in lines at government offices, after filling out forms that were returned and re-sent and returned and resent, after shelling out hundreds of dollars to immigration experts and lawyers, my parents and *abuelita* became legal residents during the 1980's, and a decade later, they were granted U.S. citizenship.

"*Mijo*, you need to pull over again," *mi amá* says. But I drive, just to flirt for a while with life on the run. I wait until the SUV swirls reds and blues to finally park roadside. An immigration officer walks up to my window. I roll it down inviting desert air that chokes. "No, sir," I say. "I have not seen Pancho Villa."

mike maniquiz

fresno

BARAKO

Literally it means the strongest one.
We drank it, charcoal stove brewed,
Expecting fabled boldness to slap us awake.
Now behind us was the night
We built a fire, tossed river brush, *lambanog*
And poetry by the river. Why poetry?
We were young, someone hammered a sign
Between our brows that says before dreaming
Of publishing, poets ought to burn
Their early works. The literal is one
Of art's greatest crimes, as we must have
Been that night, but see, we were burning
The unrequited lover's moon, the prostitute's
Dance, and well-intentioned abstractions.
Circling the fire, our red masks flickered
Like moth wings around the fire.
We woke up in ashes by morning,
And midway into our trek back, a thatch
Roof house rose into our vision,
The owner appearing in the bend
Like a heartache in a kundiman,
Smoking, squatting beside an emaciated dog.
He asked where we were headed,
And we just pointed north. The wife,
Looking out the window as though
Seeing birds she'd never seen before,
Insisted that we stop for coffee.
"Best time to have one," the farmer said,
Raising a cup to his lips, saluting nothing,
And quietly, characteristic of the man
Of the house, he grabbed his *buri* hat
And prepared himself for a day in the fields.
He wouldn't take our money.
"In the city maybe, but not here,"
He said. Typical of us.
That day we found the Muse

Who showed us what it's about,
That it's never going to be about us.
A decade later, oblivious to these remnants,
Lining up in urbanite America, in a coffee shop,
My eyes traveling from the scones to the sign
That advertises the coffee of the day
Complex with a dash of sophistication,
I was suddenly warm for something vaguely had,
A barefoot balancing act
With a glass of steaming coffee in each hand,
Telling us to "Drink, drink." How good was it?
Coffee, now brewed from the fires of a burning house.

THE FEAST OF THE MIDWEST

There he was, mopping the floor of some Midwest diner,
When the awareness came to him unforgivable
And expendable as a tray of plates dropped at the height
Of lunch hour: Here's the myth, but it says nothing about you.
He was hungry for the familiar, every face he saw
Resembled no one he knew, and even in his dreams
The brown faces of his children have started to take on
These people's hard features, their corn silk hair.
It's what I think of entering this diner
And into one of his stories where the short-order cook
With periscopic neck eyes me warily from behind his kitchen,
The waitress sags her shoulders while I smell the greasy
Condescension, imagine Jack in *Five Easy Pieces*
And order coffee and toast. There is nothing in the air
But country on the radio, a lonely croon,
A windblown tune caught in barbed wire.
And the sky is no help when it's as big as this one.
By night, it turns into an empty begging bowl
An oblivious hand flips down, where a man comes
Apart like words in a half-remembered song
From the barrio and catches the last Greyhound out of here.

sasha pimentel chacón

el paso

THE BODY IS A HOST OF WANT

It's elemental. Dragging itself across
with furry haunches, the eating beast slimes
the linoleum, sticks its fingers in your grandmother's hair
and opens its gullet for pennies. *Feed me copper* it shrieks,
and you do: watch the hard coins go swallowing in.
You can see its mouth cancer bared in its teeth,
the woven tissues of the soft palate flaring
against each other, swollen as the uvula. It looks wet
like the insides of a pomegranate, wet where
the membranes between the fruit's seeds
can come together like a star, their center
such a small throat. You think this must be
what Persephone saw when that same fruit was cut
for her hand—not a face, as in Hume's pareidolia,
but a throat, and a mouth, and that delicious
compulsion to put one mouth to another.
Persephone, don't! you want to say, this will cost us
many summers, this will bring your mother's sorrow,
this weds death to us all. But that hulk of instinct
is already lumbering near—*here are its parting jaws*—
and you know too what it feels like to forget
how a hibiscus can open, how the thistle looks
like a brush, painting persimmons.
You know what it is to forget chicory.
And because Persephone feeds, so do you:
each seed (each taut root you love) slides down like a fish,
becoming fish, empurpling the throat through each
esophageal stricture, waved into the progress
of a swallow, they drop down the canal—
a garden whirling in the stomach's sea.

WANTED: ENCYCLOPEDIA MISSING FROM MOVE

I lost the Ws once. Walnuts, Wagner, a warble.
Lost the Wampanoag Indians, their wampum,
the peak I climbed which started with a *W*—

its fissures breaking open
before breath. There was the West
Lawn *(a borough just west of Reading,*

population 2,059), Walla Walla, Washington,
then even the weeping willow left, and a willow
pattern from Mama's hutch. And wasn't there

a bird? I swear I saw it once, wings sleek
and blue last time I saw my grandfather, who
I forgot again and again. The ocean wide.

I wanted to lose water. My daughter.
I wanted to miss words and get others back: *Wala na...*
(Translation: *all gone).*

Mostly I wanted Grandfather's name back, hollow
in my tonsil. But I lost witness. And I became
the worm, the wood, a wound—
my wholeness lifted.

Once, Grandfather had a blade. I saw him
ripping in two, open, the body
of a coconut: how sweet milk ran into his hands.

IT SHOULD ALL END LIKE THIS:

with a flower, and with someone
holding that flower, and someone holding
that someone holding that flower,
who has held flowers before, in fact,
who has cupped in his hands red
plumerias from someone else's privates,
though this is a different kind of flowering,
not unlike when her finger plumed
with a begonia while slicing an onion
for him to see, and touch, and taste—she was
using it as a metaphor, and he thought
how it looked like water lilies
he saw, blurred in a museum once, where she
had come and touched his arm just like
that, as if they had known each other
all along, as if they had known, and as if
he had never lifted that spray of gladiolus,
stacked hearts exploding on firm stakes,
onto her, and their son, who then plucked
a flower, who wouldn't be able
to tell what kind of blossom
it was at all, just that it was from a stone,
and rippable as paper, wasn't shifting
from foot to foot—his flower not taken
without words, and held without words,
just as the black box was plunging to the earth.

family and friends

memory ii

Odd as this may sound, I didn't meet Andrés Montoya when he was a student at Fresno State, though of course I heard a lot about him during that time, due to his political activities on campus. The first time I actually met him was in Eugene, Oregon, where I had gone with my family to visit our friend T. R. Hummer, who was teaching there at the time. Andrés, as I recall, came over in early evening with Daniel Chacón (Danny to me back then) but he must not have said much, because I don't recall any particular lines of his from the evening, and in my experience, when Andrés Montoya talked, you remembered what he said. My first real conversation with him occurred some years later, when I ran into him in the jazz section at Tower Records here in Fresno. He told me he'd read an essay of mine and liked it, and the next thing I knew I had a severe backache because we had stood right there, having a discussion about literature, for close to forty-five minutes. I will never forget an opinion Andrés ventured that day on the nature of poetry collections. "Some of them that don't work would work if they'd been put together right," he said. "You have to think of the whole book as one long poem and put the parts in the right places or the whole thing will just be noise."

Most of my encounters with Andrés were like that. He once came over to my house on a Friday morning to bring me a water color he'd done for me—it hangs in my living room now—and he sat at my kitchen table drinking coffee from eleven AM until four PM. Both of us were so caffeinated it's a wonder we didn't go through the roof. The conversation that day was wide-ranging, taking in football, faith, race, Marxism, sex, death, violence and—as always—poetry. Andrés didn't do small-talk, or if he did he never did it around me. He knew life was too short for that. He wanted to talk about things that really mattered, and in my fifty-one years I've never had better conversations with anybody.

Steve Yarbrough

tim z. hernandez

boulder

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ALTAR

Once I have slipped from my skin into sediment
amidst salted alluvials
gathering east of the Rockies
or among the sagging algodón
defeated by valley fog—
in preparing the altar
follow these instructions:

I have no regrets
therefore no water is necessary
for dim ablutions
rather, let the dirtiness of smoke
recall the unpredictability of my name

When I awoke, I did so knowingly
I have never been afraid of the dark
yet, when I shut my eyes
the invisible becomes apparent

There are no heavens where heavens await
No pyramid but in the sternum
Only angels and corrupt deities now

Release the sage from its bundle,
the scapulary too

Release the tooth of a snowflake
from its own sudden drift

To what water does the arroyo submit?

Release the ancient beat box from
technological epiglottis

Release the gnarled bough in holy books
Release the music of woodwinds
abejas huddling from nothing

Release this name
and all that it conjures
not the kiss, or penetration
not the naïve boy whistling by the ditch-bank
somewhere on an obscure hillside
or the father's tenderness
moment after moment

I see you standing against
the dull saffron of a Western sun
and think of how one enters the world
headlong—devoted to the flesh
born majestic, bloodied & writhing
no mind prayer concocted

origin of prayer
someplace else

origin of plum blossom
one beat before the scent

origin of suffering
various hells occur simultaneously

origin of Juan Diego
a fruit stand south of Delano

origin of Nirvana
ass flat burnt from too much now

origin of The Kingdom
tenderness of the heart

origin of Samsara
consistently returning

origin de Fé
si Diosito quiere

origin of Elegua
a beat-box entombed

origin of Ahimsa
a teardrop tattoo

origin of Allah
prostration of kisses

origin of Olé
Allah caught in the act
If after these preparations
I still have yet to return
then do as we discussed
that one slow night over a six pack
& bagful of spent pistachio seeds

about how you wouldn't search for me
in lush blue cemeteries
about how you wouldn't pray for me
in rosary circles every Day of the Dead
about the emptiness of an altar
and the tiny flickering candle
above the golden chalice
that rests atop your collar bone
instead, make offerings to the blessed
calling of impermanent gut
—move on.

CONFESSIONS OF A BROWN LOTUS

A mediocre contortionist—
smuggled in the glove compartment
of a '57 Chevy
I arrived
one foot in the ass cheeks
the other folded beneath armpit
like a catcher's mitt

Used to be that I daydreamed
in a narrow canoe
on the floral waters
of Xochimilco
back when bees congregated in wax cathedrals & lit veladoras
until military blew 'em out

In Tajik teahouses I scurry
toward the kitchen in search
of the brew master
slicing ginger thin
cardamom in molcajete
because he is my father
from the hills of Michoacan
dressed in worn jeans
& baseball cap that reads Cruz Azul

Blew across Nogales
in a canteen of cactus pulp
a Swiss wristwatch
set to Mountain Time
arrived in a Colorado tavern
near Raton Pass
in search of The Buffalo
and wound up a Sherpa
for the gringos who paid cash
to free climb the Grand Teton

It's true—
I sympathize
with the crime of wire
twisted & left to corrugate
& take blame for delineations
only man conjures
Barbs sheathed in hawk carcass
wings wilt in breeze
for the animal who dares cross

I'm the bastard child you left
hunkered on a coffee can
—I'll say
promised you'd send for me in a year
dummied up the papers
and sold them in Greeley
to the cousin of a meat packer
snatched up in an ICE sting
—I'll say
I'm the meat forgotten
turning rancid
in Tombstone park
—I'll say
among the pollos
whose eyes still see
long after the legs
have ran off with the body
—Don't ask

I'm illegal
the forgotten son of Olmec proportions
my head the size of Mt. Rushmore
with my fat mouth I holler
at flea market chicks in pajama bottoms
toe rings with skulls & roses
I'm the one who bought out the intestines
and monopolized the industry

of underground roach-coaches
This in the millennium summer
but in fact, no money was ever exchanged
I performed the disembowelment
ceremony with my own two hands
the paper mistook it for a crop circle
but it was an old Nahuatl joke
Now I've got a sitcom
each week a million faces dial in faithfully
because they know that come sweeps week
after the PBS fund-drive
& before The State of the Union
we fast during sun up
Or is this Ramadan?

I visited the great Stupa
looking to mend the wounds
that I've carried since conception
about a miracle boy
born on the wrong side of Orion
seeking answers to the suffering
synonymous with joy
I am nothing but a campesino child
Brown Lotus
of this post-millennial borderland
called t/err/or
I was in Afghanistan when the first bomb dropped
from an obscure bath house
I counted down the Year of the Fire Pig
The day was a code orange
when the Spanish subway imploded
I was prostrating in the bed of an El Camino
on the outskirts of Coachella
onion sheers by my side

I've traveled the world
believe me when I tell you

it's all the same
With two fishermen
I sailed out of Veracruz
and wound up in a Swedish ferry boat
drifting Oresund Sound
I was mustard gassed in a Paris train station
for looking Moroccan
it was World Cup season after all
and the canines were in full regalia
A friend once told me to never turn my back on the dogs
everywhere I went I did so in reverse
This is how I remember
the wine bottles at Appollionaire's grave
& Jim Morrison's pitiful slab
fading away
This is how I remember the sea port in Brindisi
fading away
This is how I remember the nude beach in Pelekas
& the Dionysian coves
fading away
In a Brussels boneyard, beneath gutted boxcars
& heaps of coal
I sipped hot beer and thought of you
got up to take a piss
faded
This is how I remember you
your rough hands combing the gossamer
vortex of hair
above my scalp
A penetrable wall
a slat in razor mesh
everything about us
fading.

kenneth r. chacón

fresno

SKINSICK

It just so happens that I'm sick of this world,
sick of the rotting flesh that overwhelms me
like mud on a pearl. If I were to shed my skin,
if I were to peel this flesh like a layer of clothing,
you would see that there is something beautiful.
I have to believe this. I chant it aloud from dark
street corners when low-hanging branches of shadow
brush against me. I repeat it like a prayer, pleading
for my life, the lives of my children in a feeble attempt
to appease an angry god. It's the only thing that comforts me
as I count down the minutes until night hits, watching
my children from a cracked window as they play in gutters
and dirt and the sparse grass between these shit apartments.

And when I call my children home just before the darkness grows,
before it spreads over the varrio like a wild vine, I ask myself,
What else is there? This empty glass pipe? This loaded gun?
The streets luring me away like an adulterous woman?
Or the moon that will hang in the night like fruit,
begging to be plucked?

WHERE WILL THIS ADDICTION TAKE ME?

Tonight it takes me to a video store parking lot,
corner of Fruit and Olive. Minutes ago it took me, my car,
its barren tires, into a ripe nail, starving for attention.
And here on this corner, in a night that refuses to play nice,
to fold softly into itself and breed daylight, that I sit on the pock-
marked blacktop, waiting for the dopeman to bring me his good shit.

I sit waiting for his good shit, hoping for a half empty can of Fix-A-Flat
he said he might have, praying it'll be enough to patch. And in between
breaths, beseeches to the Lord God above, who resides in the resolute sky,
I think of all the ways I've failed. I think of my family at home waiting faith-
fully for me. I think of my wife's smile, my son's big ears, the way my daughter's
hair smells of bubble gum and fruity candy.

I should be above all this, above glass pipes that break, above twenty rocks
that are never enough, above the world's dark harvests of stale things grown
strong in moon-light, above the shadows spread like dandelion, and the darkness
that blossoms into street corners and video stores where men cradle porn
as if it were a newborn. But instead I count my blessings and the 16 dollars and odd
change that weighs my pockets down. The time is not right, grace abounds, water
becomes wine, and I sit waiting for the dopeman to bring me his good shit.

ted o'connell

bellingham

CHICANO SUPERPOWERS

The last time I spoke with Andrés, I was sitting in the basement office of the Washoe County Sheriff's Substation in a small town in Nevada, where I was employed as a community liaison to Latino youth and their families. It was strange working with cops. I felt like an imposter much of the time. But it was the best way for me to make a living and still do the work that mattered to me—which was to help Chicano youth stay in school and assure their parents they could always report a crime without fear of deportation. I had invited Andrés to participate in a Chicano Voices poetry and fiction reading at a community college where I taught fiction part-time. He called to tell me he couldn't make the reading because he was sick, needed treatments, had leukemia. My office was a gray and dusty place: cinderblock walls, random papers on the desks, bound volumes of the Nevada State Revised Codes on a shelf, a few of those black and yellow bomb shelter signs over door frames. In the next room, I could hear the inmate worker cooking his microwave pancakes for breakfast.

I felt a spasm of anger and sadness but did not think Andrés would die. I thought his news meant he would be painfully sick for a time and get better.

I said I was sorry. I lamely offered my bone marrow, having heard that you could find a match for victims of leukemia and save them outright.

Andrés muttered O.K.. He didn't want to talk about his condition, and he didn't want to talk to me. If he was going to die, getting soft with old friends was only going to make things harder. We had attended graduate school together at the University of Oregon, but because he studied poetry and I fiction, we hadn't become intimate friends.

It flashed through my mind that my Irish and German ancestry might not do him any good, even if a bone marrow transplant could be arranged. In every cross-cultural relationship, we experience periodic reminders that we're different than our friend, lover, colleague or student. Sometimes these differences are petty, innocuous, or bemusing. Sometimes they're freighted with history. Other times, they're just ignorant perceptions that have no basis in truth or science. What did I know?

I wanted to keep Andrés on the phone, because I loved his voice. I had been looking forward to rekindling our friendship. Unable to think of anything to say, I told him about my own troubles with chronic illness. A mystery virus had fouled up my autonomic nervous system, causing dizziness, fatigue, intolerance for alcohol and dairy products, a precipitous drop in blood pressure when I tried

to exercise. Doctors were stumped. I was due to see a chronic fatigue expert in a few weeks.

"Don't minimize it," he said. "Don't minimize it."

The inmate worker shuffled past in his orange jump suit, having finished his pancakes. After a time Andrés said, "Well, I just called to tell you that. I can't make the reading. I just called to tell you that."

"Take care of yourself." I hung up the phone and said, "Shit."

I wasn't sentimental about death, having lost my father at the age of twenty. When a local seventh grader committed suicide by putting a gun to his head, I didn't attend the memorial service. I didn't think the kid would be missed by more than a handful of people. But Andrés Montoya would be missed. He was a teacher for the poor. He had greatness in him. His poems had that rare quality of speaking to everyday Americans (to disenfranchised youth in particular) *and* to members of the academy. If it sounds like I'm elevating poetry to a high spiritual status, I am: Andrés Montoya's poetry. In his poems I hear America confessing the sins nobody wants to hear. I hear ice workers, prostitutes, *Sureños y Norteños* imploring me not to forget the souls of the departed, not one—making me ashamed for discounting the suicide boy whose name I can't remember.

I was working in the office of Columbia Hall, filing applications, when Andrés and Danny came in from the cold, smelling like rain. Andrés took up a lot of space in the office, his shoulders wide as a steer's, his black leather boots scuffing the orange carpet as he loped towards his mailbox. Andrés and Danny were the second-year guys on the hunt for teaching gigs and publications. I was a first year guy without a teaching fellowship, the office boy who had convinced myself I was the last person to be admitted into the program. Danny was dressed in his gray sweatshirt with the hood, and Andrés wore a large pleated vest with an oversized plaid shirt underneath. They were milling about the office, checking their mailboxes and running copies.

"Hey Superman!" said Andrés.

I looked up.

"Doesn't he look like Superman?"

"I don't look like Superman," I said.

"Not Christopher Reeves, man. The new superman dude, from the T.V. show," said Andrés.

"He does bear a striking resemblance," said Danny in a stage voice. (Danny's voice was made for the theater, whereas Andrés' voice was made for cafeteria halls

and dented microphones at open mike venues.) They were talking about Dean Something-or-other, who, incidentally, is much better looking than me. They said if I only wore glasses I'd be a dead-ringer for the new Clark Kent. I acted like I was too cool for popular television shows. For months, they wouldn't stop calling me Superman. I must admit I liked being called Superman.

Once, over beers at a bar in Eugene, Andrés, Danny and I got talking about Mexican history and the revolution. I said something to the effect that Porfirio Diaz, that despot, had done some good things for Mexico as far as modernization and standard of living upgrades.

"He killed a lot of people, too," said Andrés.

He handled me like a big brother punching his little brother—didn't make me feel unloved but just stupid. Mostly he seemed pleased that I had bothered to read Mexican history.

Somebody had given a reading that night and by eleven o'clock many of the students and professors had gone home. After a shuffle of tables, we ended up sharing our last beers with the new director, poet Terry Hummer. Danny couldn't help saying (sincerely, I think), "I'm glad you're here, Terry. I'm just really glad you're here." Terry, with his kinky gray hair and steel-rimmed spectacles, a Mississippi man, jazz lover, editor, Ph.D, and student of the sixties—he had this way of sticking his chin into the air and moving his lips in thought. "Thanks, man, thanks." He'd come to Oregon without a wife or a child, a reasonably affectionate man where his students were concerned. He was a gifted teacher with a catholic intelligence and a Southern accent that had been quickened by years of living in the East. "Thanks, man, thanks."

After Terry went home, Andrés locked his eyes on Danny and shook his head. "Pinche mamón" he said. He huddled over his beer and cigarettes and said again, "Pinche mamón," *You suck-ass.*

"What?" said Danny.

"Mamón," he said at least seven more times.

"I'm not a mamón. I was just telling him exactly how I felt."

Now in a little girl's voice, mocking, "*I'm so glad you're here, Terry.*"

That was in the fall. In the Spring, Terry looked up at the lights of another tavern and told me, "He has greatness in him. Andrés has greatness in him."

Oregon's MFA program was arguably the most ethnically diverse program in the country at the time, with students who were Korean-American, Chinese-

American, Nepalese, Turkish-American, Japanese-American, Indian-American, African-American, Elwha Indian, Australian, and Chicano. While we generally got along, I recall a healthy level of sensitivity to ethnic differences. I'd heard stories of white students making ignorant comments in the poetry workshop, and students of color taking offense—and I know I made one or two gaffs of my own. But in the main our awareness of differences was a healthy thing. To be one color and to know the other is to face your own ignorance. Our friend John, an Elwha Indian from Washington state, never felt wholly comfortable in a masters program that for all its diversity couldn't help being shaped by the dominant culture. John identified with Andrés. He liked that Andrés tried to piss off the establishment, choosing to read his barrio poems at public readings when he could have chosen something silkier and more aesthetically formal. They were both barrel-chested guys with long hair and indigenous blood. By our second year, after Andrés had moved back to California, I could sense that John was missing Andres. In so many ways, he tried explaining to me what it was like being the only Indian guy in the program, and most of the time he rambled on until he got to Andrés, what he did, what he said. "You know what I'm talking about?"

I always nodded.

My experience with non-whites had mostly been among blacks and Jews in my home town, and Mexicans in the state of Chihuahua, where I had done some volunteer work for Habitat for Humanity. (Andrés was the one who taught me how to say "Cha-húa-húa!" from my gut, like a karate shout. "Is that where you learned your Spanish, man, in Cha-húa-húa?") Garret Hongo, the extraordinary poet and former director of the program, told me in private that I'd been admitted to the program in part because I'd shown "a sensitivity to other cultures." I had submitted some of my writings from Mexico. I could speak Spanish. But I didn't really know *Chicano* culture until Andrés and Danny made me Superman.

Their friendship is the reason I took a job in a sheriff's substation, allocating cop funds to purchase Luis Rodriguez' *Always Running* for members of the youth group. (Here is an irony Andrés would have loved, the cops buying the book by the cop critic.) Their friendship is why I'm an advisor to the MEChA club and why I teach Chicano Studies at a college in Mount Vernon, Washington, where 25% of the students in the local elementary school are Latino. I didn't know MEChA existed until Danny invited me to play a small role in his *teatro*, "The Finest Tastiest Carrot Ever." I was given the part of the oppressive field boss, the Okie who gets upset because the farm workers are eating too much of the crop they're supposed to be harvesting. Andrés, that brown buffalo, sat in the

audience beside my one-hundred pound wife, who by comparison looked as beautiful and small as a poem. She told me Andrés was much pleased with my Okie rendition, taking off his glasses and wiping the glistening laughter from his eyes. He rubbed his callused hands together and shifted his haunches in the too-small seat. How much did he weigh back then? Two-twenty? Was he really that big, or is it the poetry that enlarges him? *I tried to love once but ended up punching everyone.*

Nobody carries on the work of another. What's lost is gone. You do your own work in the spirit of your friend, who is too authentic to let anyone make him a martyr. You do work that you wouldn't be doing had you not met that person. I am a helpful mentor to most of my students, but the Chicanos are still better served by the likes of Andrés Montoya—and by young men who share his *ritmo*, charisma, his *cultura*, his street smarts and intellectual rigor. I'm thinking about Lupe Palacios, Smiley Lopez, Victor Rodriguez, Edgar Franks, Diana Lopez and Federico Martinez (all former students) who last year founded a non-profit youth center called "Tonalli," which means "inner energy" in the language of the Aztecs. Some of these activists came to college as an escape from gang violence in Los Angeles; some came looking for a purpose after serving a prison term; to answer a life without a father; to shed his given name, "Ronal," because the Reagan he came to know in the United States didn't jibe with the "Ronal" Reagan held in esteem by his parents in El Salvador. They remake themselves, name their children after Aztec figures, *Coyolxauhaui*, the first daughter of mother earth. They probably would have founded Tonalli had they not been my students, but who knows? Maybe, maybe not.

Every year, when Tonalli asks me to share some poetry to a new batch of Chicano youth, after the boys in the baggy pants and flannel shirts grab-ass their way through my introduction, after the girls pass one more note, the group hushes up when the ice worker begins to sing. Their heads drop, and for all I know they might be praying.

john b. boyd

elwha klallam

THE ICE MAN SPEAKS

"It is reality" said the man
From the Fresno fields,
He had followed me
To the river valley,
Where Indian Jack
Lay on the sandy beach,
Arms extended, legs crossed
And the dunes wet as,
Fog, rolling,
As those wild strawberries
Lay hidden in the dunes
And those words
Had traveled far, far from those
Fields to a pacific coastal berm

While the sea cast yellow light
And hid in the drops of dew
Falling to the sand
From the bonsai forest bent
From those ocean breezes

The voice from the fields whispered again
"It is reality; it is not magic, as real as
The moment of the sun falling
On the earth and strawberries
Blood staining the fingers
Of the fieldworkers picking,
Picking faster, as the earth continued
To move from sun up to sun down

The man from the fields
Followed me home, he said
"It is reality, not magic".
I lay down again in the sand and listed
Toward the simmering moon
Rising over the valley red

"Our time is coming, it is reality"

The man made of memories speaks
Of fields, swimming pools
I feel the chill
Of his words
My sweat drops to the earth

The man made of song sings
About rows upon rows
Of red berries picked
And lettuce rotting
A tobacco leaf crumbles
In my pocket

The man sweats
In the field of rocks
A field of mud turning
To dust as I listen
There is no swimming pool
No water for thirst
And grandma has a hunch
From picking berries

While he speaks
The ground turns red
With reflections
Of water
Of fire
Of earth
And those glorious feasts
Of ancient memories

While I stand at the glacier's edge listening.

david good

fresno

SITTING HERE IN SPRING

Because of the pickets in wooden fences,
rows of stucco-ed walls, here, a yellow car.
Because of these I think of you who talked,
sat after work in cafes,
whispered last breaths without knowing
last breaths to be what they were.

Because the last walk among the green trees
to the office to pick up a check
was the last walk before the end
was the order of the day,
we walked from coffee cups and talked
about poems we admired and the regular tasks
that inhabited our lives and your sudden pain.

And because people die as the order of things
you died not knowing the last walk was that
or the last talk or coffee was the last,
and now I know, sitting here:
thump of a passing car, red brick planters,
end-of-winter new-born buds in trees.

INTENSIVE CARE

The bird at the end of your deathbed is a parrot
No cerulean vest or feathers cast in electric green

He is the color of wet concrete

Perched on the rail the parrot winks
You know he has the final say

No nautical squawk no ominous rise of wings
No widening gyre of buzzard or hawk

He lifts and sets his foot
He waits for you to speak

And in your faulty heart you know
That what you say the parrot will repeat

So what will it be? Yes or no?

The parrot. You. The ghostly sheet.

teresa tarazi

clovis

ONE DAY

leukemia feasted on the belly
I loved so much.
Your weight held you on so much earth,
wealth on one side, poverty on the other.
You spoke from this belly guiding
our eyes to see white dust floating over vejitos,
chavalitos, mothers and fathers working in green pastures,
working to restore their souls beside still waters.

They found your friend dead after the rains, cancer a killer
for those who dare work fields of gold,
but this did not frighten you into silence.
Cancer lingered in the shadows, tempting you,
your beautiful black-eyed girl with curly hair,
imagined herself in a white dress as she walked down the disinfected hospital halls
into your room, into your weak arms, balding body, empty belly.

Did you know this would happen?
Is that why you met cancer
in the ring ready to rumble
and take it down before it took you? Or perhaps you did not know,
perhaps it would never have come, perhaps this is foolish talk
you knew that we, too, are dying from Leukemia,
from fumes hidden in walls washed with asbestos,
from black soot bellowing from car waste in the Valley
and clinging to our lungs
or as we lie on sun-death beaches
eating corporate plums, peaches and grapes
ripe with death.

augustine f. porras

los angeles

BETWEEN THREE PALM TREES

On the bike path
that goes south
in front of LAX,
there is a spot
I've ridden past
a thousand times, but the first
time I noticed
the spot, or area, or place,
was early one Sunday morning.

There was this couple
in their 50s
embracing. The woman
in open sob, letting it out.
The man consoling, holding,
looking over her shoulder
at the ocean.

And I am riding by
less then three feet away,
and I am breathing in
and they are breathing out,
and I get this
story of their suffering,
of their daughter's passing,
how it was expected
when stage three
spread to stage four,
and how it hurts, to this day,
and how it will continue to hurt,
and how the ocean helps
to ease the pain,
of the unseen and the seen
the known and the unknown
the here and the ever after

that is the ocean,
that steel grey curtain,
that vastness of sky
from here to the horizon,
from land's edge,
as if this beach were a mountain
peak of both land and air.

On the way back on the bike path
I noticed they were gone. But there
have been others, always
mourning, deep in grief,
and always in this spot,
between three palm trees
that reach into the sky.

Maybe there's a river
with a pulse and heart
beat of forgotten sorrow
that flows unseen
beneath the sand to the sea,
water that reverberates,
that speaks of love,
water that somehow
attracts those in despair,
that says to come here,
that this is the place
to grieve.

Maybe there's a river
born from tears, from blood
dripped in despair. Maybe this is what
encircles the earth? Maybe this
cosmic belt of love is what holds it together
and keeps it from bursting apart.

Maybe this is what
the couple was doing, holding on,
as much as they were holding each other,
inches from the fire burning
blackened coals of melancholy

in the chest of an ordinary man
and woman, holding each other
near the ocean, embracing
each other, bracing themselves
against the wind, their chest
ripped apart and filled with wood,

their heart held up above their heads,
they thought the fire in their chest
was something other then the pain
felt from the loss of a loved one,
but in the end, that's what it was.

THE WHISTLE OF A TRAIN

Is that you Andrés, returning
As a humming bird, to sip at the
Nectar of the flower outside my window?

Is that you I stumbled across
In the yoke of a tree, in the shape
Of a squirrel, looking back at me amazed?

Is that you in the shadow of my dreams,
Telling me to write this down, songs of
Beauty, words of forgiveness, God's Love.

Is that you in the chair, the one reserved
For the dead? Can you hear the whistle? The distant
Scream of a train leaving Fresno, is that you?

Is that your new found voice, Andrés?
Born of steam, fired from coal, the Song of Psalms
released into the air, over the city of Fresno.

Your voice as large as a mountain,
Your voice as smooth as a mountain stream,
Whether rich or poor, homeless or one that

Possesses a key to a lock that opens a door—
There's no escaping the whistle of a train, that
Lone cry, voicing the injustices of the world.

ROAD TRIP

Who drove under the influence of a historical Atzlan
from the Pacific Ocean through the
hills of Guanajuanto, Semana Santa
Who stopped in San Luis Potosí to fill up on gasoline
Who drove in line through the car wide tunnel of copper
Who stopped in Catorce of Fourteen a day before Easter
Who walked the side streets of stone built from stone
past abandoned houses built of stone
Who walked along terraced walls tumbling down
Who saw the side room in the town church
painted sky blue and lined with
stories of love asking of forgiveness
Who drove scared along the chiseled edge of a steep cliff
Who drove past a donkey dead by the side of the road
Who stopped to drink after three days of not eating
Who stopped after miles of desert dust and dirt to search
Who looked for hours blind before finding the "eye"
Who cut loose the green cacti close to the skin's surface
Who washed away the dirt from the button of earth
Who drank and ate for three days the bitter flesh of Jesus
Who hung from a cross in ecstasy asking for more
peyote as a means of salvation
Who did not move though watched as the world turned
Who held aloft three soft blue sensations of sand
Who saw the blue terrain articulate a lost thirteenth vertebrae
Who pissed green tea for three days
Who dreamed of cows in the night passing from our lives
Who dreamed of a dead deer with eight blind eyes
Who saw my dead grandmother in the face of an old woman
in Mexico City
Who saw buildings dissolve into vapor and fade from view
in Mexico City
Who ate skulls of sugar and kissed the cold skull of the dead
in Mexico City
Who climbed the volcano Popo alone and at midnight

Who smelled the bitter sulfur rising from the crater rim
Who stood naked before the moon in absolute amazement
Who thought about diving in but decided against it
Who said to the stars above and to the just cut eucalyptus
let us turn towards the light that shines against the darkness
towards the love that blinds us all

THE SWEETNESS OF THE SOIL

Eating the oranges of Philip Levine
Is a kind of blessing, for I have seen the tree
That produced this fruit. I've sat in its

September shadow and cried having remembered my
Grandmother in the words of others, and later
Thinking of Andrés walking in the field

Across from the cemetery where he is buried.
I cut the orange from the tree in half, then
Quarters. I just love the smell, the God-like

Color they have of the sun when sliced in two.
Valencia blossom bloom grown in Fresno's own
Sandy loam, heavy with the sweetness of the soil.

This is what love is all about, poetry and oranges
Held open and cupped in your hands, in the afternoon
Shade of a tree that has seen the face of heaven.

lee herrick

fresno

FOR ANDRÉS AND ELEANOR

Love heals from the inside.
Yusef Komunyakaa

Last night I left the back door open
and let the moon's breeze come over me,

and yes, I could hear you Eleanor.
I could hear you whisper Andrés' name

into the darkening sky and call out
the ice worker and all of his songs.

This morning, when the moon was still there
begging for one more song, I crawled out

of bed and thought of you again. I wish
Andrés, that there would be one more hour

at the café. I wish
God might declare it all a joke, but

I know how much he wanted you and
how much you wanted him, too. This is what counts.

So I'll leave you alone. I'll go now
to the sun and imagine the actions of

angels, sweetened from the sun,
whispering to the moon about revolution.

michael luis medrano

fresno

CONFESSION OF A CHICANO LIT STUDENT

My Chicano lit teacher was a large man who wore black Dickies workpants and combat boots to class. His hair flowed in a loose ponytail halfway down his back. When he wrote notes on the chalkboard the tiny stick of calcium disappeared in hands that resembled polar bear paws; hands that I was sure had seen some serious gang days, or at the very least, could carve a cut into a piece of meat. Andrés Montoya reminded me of your typical raza hardliners; those barely graduated brothers with enough *movimiento* testosterone to fuel the next wave of activists.

In my third semester at Fresno City College I felt I was on my way in becoming *El Más Chingón*, instead, I was infected, genuinely, by a poet whose love for justice was synonymous with the language and rhythms of poetry—words like "weep" and "Kentucky" became bullets of his lyrical revolution, something I would come to learn, not in his class, but ironically, in the streets of Fresno, where many of my most poignant encounters with the poet took place.

In coffee shops, museums, bookstores and street corners, my run-ins with Andrés were often as intimidating as the police. The typical small talk would quickly turn into a metaphoric size-up, for he often concluded these miniscule conversations with phrases and questions that were often much larger than the events that had occurred in my day.

Once, between classes, I approached Andrés, and we talked. Out of the thick, Valley air, Andrés asked, "Why write?" The jarring question was something Whitman would pull off during his time of writing *Leaves of Grass*. I imagined America's poet, taking a break from the writing, sipping coffee with Thoreau, posing such a dense, multi-layered question, and the equally famous author becoming baffled, not knowing how to answer. On that crisp, autumn morning, I believed Andrés channeled Whitman, or at the very least, measured me with his intent: "Why write?" These questions circled my mind: *Are you asking me, or are you asking everybody else? Who are you asking, Andrés, from what tree should I answer, from what parking lot, or church? I don't know how to answer this question Andrés. What is it that you want from me?*

On the first day of the semester Andrés asked who was a poet. Three people raised their hands, than a fourth, a slow, reluctant fourth, that was me. That singular moment was the first time I called myself "poet." At the time, I was writing these enormous passages that weren't really prose, and they weren't exactly poetry either. They were bold claims of Chicanismo; manifestos written

in the spirit of Corky Gonzalez's *Yo Soy Joaquin* and José Angel Gutierrez's *22 Miles*. Andrés was familiar with these activists' works, but we didn't read them. Instead, he brought in the whimsical verse of Luis Omar Salinas, the vato poetics and caló experiments of Jose Montoya, and the gut wrenching honesty of Lorna Dee Cervantes. He taught us how to appreciate these great poems and we read aloud every class meeting.

We picked the ones we liked, talked about favorite lines, and those who were more versed in poetry than the others, brought in poems by other poets. I recall local poet and performer, Estela Molina bringing in an odd, homemade chapbook by a poet I had never heard of, Tim Z. Hernandez. She read one of his poems in class and Andrés' immediate response was, "I never heard of that dude, but he sounds a little like Juan Felipe Herrera," local Fresno poet who was once mentor to Andrés. Less than a year later, Tim and I read alongside Andrés Montoya for one of his final readings at Arte Americas; in the middle of the downtown gallery, Andrés read the poem, the *ice worker considers mercy and grace*. After his vibrant reading, the capacity crowd sat there, stunned in their own silence. It was so quiet, I swear I heard one of the cockroaches in the corner of the room cry out, "Can you hear it now/life in the middle of it all..."

On January 1, 1994, a tiny village in Chiapas, Mexico was pillaged by Mexican soldiers. At least forty individuals, most of them children and their mothers, were among the victims of this end of the century massacre. The government's excuse? They were looking for los Zapatistas. To commemorate the fourth anniversary of the tragedy, myself, and a few fellow activists, clad in ski masks and bandanas, reminiscent of the revolutionary clothing of the Zapatistas, participated in the burning of the American flag. The small protest, which was televised on Channel 30 Action News, might've been a grand success had we staged the uprising at the Federal Building instead of City Hall, and had Ralphy Avitia, spokesperson of our group, not purchased that cheap Bic Lighter from the gas station up the street. The slight revolution might have actually looked like one of those famous movidas of the 60's, instead *la bandera* burned slow and the wool from my beanie mask made me itch bad, really bad.

When classes resumed from winter break I ran into Andrés at the college library. I had just completed a short, one-act play, and asked him if he would star as the lead. He told me yes.

Two Brothers
Draft One

MONTOYA
I saw you on the news bro.

MEDRANO
You did? What did you think?

MONTOYA
Chingón. Muy Chingón.

Two Brothers
Draft Two

MONTOYA
I saw you on the news bro.

MEDRANO
You did? What did you think?

MONTOYA
How cute.

When *the iceworker sings and other poems* was finally released, I picked up the slim book and read it cover to cover in the poetry section at Barnes and Noble. I read some of my favorites: *The Escape*, *Landscapes of Sadness*, and *The Ice worker Explains to the Judge...* so loud, I was sure to be thrown out into the Fresno streets, never to be allowed back into the popular book chain again. I thought this would be my way of presenting Andrés's poetry to the world, that I would ignore the stares and challenge the cynics by claiming, "I'm just an ice worker/who wants to write poems/of praise..." that good ol' city hall would one day be the place of poems... Instead, I acquired a few harsh glares from a couple of *gavas* in the building. I would soon melt into the complacency of books, and reread the works of this poet "who tried to love once/but ended up punching/everybody"—including me.

maceo montoya

sacramento

LETTER TO THE ARTIST FROM HIS SON

This can only be written to you, viejo. I envisioned a more academic essay; I even had a title: "The Anatomy of a Failed Movement: The State of Chicano Art." But as I researched, reading the work of scholars and cultural critics commenting on forty years of el movimiento, I saw your name, your vision, indelibly stamped on countless pages, and I realized how little of your struggle remains. Maybe nothing more than these texts – mere words recorded for history. I sat in this grand library, surrounded by thousands of books, far away from home, from you, and this realization filled me with a profound sadness: my father has lost... hemos perdido, we all have.

Type "Chicano" or "Chicano art" into any Internet search engine, and within the first couple of websites exists one that is simply, Chicano. Click on the link and a plainly designed page appears. There in large, stylized Old English lettering is the word "Chicano." Just below is "Presented by Target," along with the corporation's logo. "Sponsored by: Hewlett Packard" is written below that, and further down is yet another corporate entity: "Produced by Clear Channel."

There is no immediate mention of artwork or the five-year, fifteen-city traveling exhibition of Cheech Marin's art collection. The only indication of anything art related is the website address, "chicano-art-life," which may have been an inspiring title in another context. But there is "Chicano" – the name our people embraced so many years ago – surrounded by corporate sponsors. Chicano, the name of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta; the name of Reies López Tijerina, Corky Gonzalez, and Rubén Salazar; the name of demonstrators, marchers, activists, militants, artists, students, workers...and now: Chicano, brought to you by America's corporations.

The cooptation of such an important part of our identity should come as no surprise. Over twenty years ago you warned your fellow artists of "a system that feeds with one hand and strangles with the other." Somehow, despite the dismantling of affirmative action and bilingual education, anti-immigration backlash, increased residential and school segregation, and the very real existence of a Chicano underclass, we have been convinced that we are no longer being strangled; our "liberation" is no longer necessary; the issues of thirty and forty years ago no longer exist. Accordingly, the political Chicano artist has become an archaic notion. Instead, a new generation has emerged that no longer feels the responsibility to give a voice to the Chicano community.

Like myself, this new generation is largely from the middle class and art school educated, but these artists prefer not to identify themselves as Chicano. In a recent article in *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, entitled, "The new Chicano movement," young artists asserted that they felt confined by "identity-based" art and were tired of being curated by ethnic category. In the words of one conceptual artist, "Sometimes I feel like we're carrying this baggage on our shoulders, like we've been born into it." Another artist asserted, "Why just because of my name should I be put in a show based on color, when all the white students I graduated with are being put in show based on their work?" Others repeatedly characterized the previous generation's art as strictly about identity; "The Chicano tradition of activism and social commentary is so important to me...but if your work is only about identity, a lot of people can't relate to it."

How has it come to this? Did we learn nothing from the Chicano movement? How do these artists not understand that white artists' work is just as much about identity? Just because their identity blends seamlessly into the white art-establishment doesn't make it any less so. How have we been made to feel as if our identity, our Chicanismo - who we are, where we came from, our history - is a burden? How have we forgotten that we are not *made* to feel different: we are different. Who made us ashamed of our differences? Who convinced us that the creative expression of these differences subordinated the quality of our work?

I fear we can blame only ourselves. We have regressed forty years. Once again, we are Hispanics seeking assimilation, this time under a subtler guise. We choose the mainstream American or pan-Latino aspects of our experience - from pop-culture, mass media, to our broken Spanish - to herald the "newness" of our identity. We are not Chicano like our parents; we never picked grapes or strawberries; we listen to Hip-hop, not corridos; our friends and colleagues are white. Sure, we're liberal, but the Chicano underclass, the legions of Mexican immigrants working in the fields and service industry, are no longer our exclusive concern. We seek a more "universal" audience, essentially meaning an esoteric art world. We have become mainstream, our ethnic identity streamlined. You once wrote, "It will be a victory when Chicano communities find Chicano artists a success because they are viewed as spokespersons, citizens of humanity, and their visual expression viewed as an extension of themselves." The Chicano vanguard has secured its place in history; we are indebted to those who came before us, but the notion of a people's spokesperson has passed. Sadly, when artists forget or deny that their community defines them, then they play no part in its continual redefinition, in fleshing out its complexities and transmutations. What suffers is the forging of a lasting, representative, and truly universal culture.

I write this, viejo, but I must admit there are times when the name Chicano becomes stuck on my tongue, when the effort to explain or to convince proves too difficult; when I feel as if I'm describing a lost race, inhabitants of a distant land. I know I am a Chicano because otherwise I do not exist, and I am a Chicano Artist because my work must reflect the tenuous nature of this existence, a people in between lands, languages, histories, a people forever in between, forever defined by its contradictions. But I ask you, father, you who were there when we first recognized that our history and culture were as real as any other; is it true that Chicanismo now only exists in textbooks and academia? Was that all it was, a movement, an era, an idea? I am reminded of my brother's words, when he asked, *And where Raza are our heroes?* Our heroes are gone, have we lost our voices, too?

josé montoya

sacramento

Chicanos before the war, Raza
Before the war.

Chicano varrios and bridges go way back like
The tracks and the projects across the tracks
Across the bridge, across the highway and the freeway
And the wars – double you double you tu solo tu,
Korea and Viet Nam -- varrios and bridges and rivers
And wars and labels and terms como la migra los
Projects los traques la jura los files y el wero feliz – all
Have a sacred affinity to Chicano enclaves,

From whence shall come
The new revolt!

EL CÍRCULO

It could not have been any other way
It could not have been any thing else.

It had to be the circle to heal hell.

We all came to it, illing, ailing—unwashed.
And the survivors, in twenty years, were rewarded.

And we witnessed four generations
Receive the medicine—emanating, radiating
From that focus—up down and the four
Directions—powerful!

Group one, the elders, aging, nursing blown
Prostates and liver damage, slipping and sliding—but
Clean.

Group two, clean, but ravages of past abuse
Taking toll yet remain stellar role models for
Group three, the gang—bangers facing one more
Strike now saved, clean and agile, metamorphosing
Jaguars, fire tenders and willow cutters and singers
Of lodge songs—saving generation four—now
Coming to the circle straight from the middle school,
Grandfather.

We couldn't all be saved but group three
Impressed us all!

Each water wind and fire came together for 'em,
For us—for all.

Ho Ometteotle

teachers

memory III

ANDRÉS MONTOYA POET WHO TOUCHES LIGHT

Andrés who scribbled Go Back Home Whitey on Fresno campus concrete when
he was being harassed for talking about changes & language & culture & all those
kinda rights in the 90's
later he leaned on glass touched light pouring through his window at St. Agnes
leukemia he said look at my watercolors these new poems too — I never thought I
would write about birds and that tiny book on my shelf it's Milosz the road about
existence then he lay back
the bed was afloat in the room I knelt down and kissed his hand that willed wand
of blood

Juan Felipe Herrera

garrett hongo

eugene

HOLIDAY IN HONOLULU

after a photograph

Billie in a yellow bikini and without the gardenia in her hair,
But instead a dark hibiscus, plump as her curls.
Next to her, Armstrong in Bermudas and a flat English driver's cap,
The famous grin spreading wide as the beach behind them.
And Trummy Young, that marooned trombonist from Gibson's Bar,
Dressed in a hotel robe and swim trunks, flanks her other side.

She looks shy, perhaps off the drugs or only lightly dosed,
Not quite sad, as the sun makes a light gleam off their skins.
I'd never thought of them here, American jazz greats,
cavorting on the beach,
The big pink hotel looming just off Armstrong's right shoulder,
Celebrities among the tourists, bringing their brand of music
To mix in among the *ùkelele*, steel guitars, and falsetto tenors
of the hotels.
But Pahinui must have, his singing a short breath
behind the beat sometimes,
Playing that slappy catch-up, tailgating to the rhythm
Like Satchmo, who showed Holiday how to do the same,
All hip to the bluesy, hesitation style—a kind of tease.

And didn't Gabby sound like Charlie Christian sometimes,
Strumming that guitar to a hula measure,
A half-beat off the One and swinging the pace
So the music had that feel of a five o'clock jump?

I don't know for sure, but musicologists tell me
Hawai'i was forever a crossroads, seaborne chants
From Polynesia circulating up via Tahitian canoe
And bouncing back from Rapa Nui,
Where only the *moai* survive now.
And then the missionary hymns crept in,
The falsetto yodel of Argentine vaqueros.
After that, Mississippi and Louisiana delta blues,

Swamp songs from the steamships through the Panama Canal,
Their deckhands exchanging licks with the local guitar-pickers,
Bottlenecks sliding like spit on Hotel Street.
Pretty soon, a *paniolo* puts the dull edge of his knife
On the open-tuned strings of a Dobro, and we get the lap steel
And hapa-haole songs of mixed Hawaiian and English,
Chang-a-lang from the Portuguese, *kachi-kachi*
And *son montuno* from Puerto Rican cane and pineapple workers.

What's "original" anyway? *Indigenous* and *essentially* anything?

I'll take Holiday in Honolulu, plucking a red hibiscus
From a green hotel bush as she saunters from the lobby
Across the breezy *lanai* with the *tiki* torches aflame and smoking,
The scent of gingerflowers from *awapuhi* hotel soap on her skin,
Cocking her head to one side and pulling back the lush hair,
Placing the stem and pea-green corolla back behind an unjeweled ear,
Giving Armstrong and Trummy Young that bluesy wink of hers
As she adjusts the small bell of the bloom so it opens
Like a pliant, red trumpet in the sweetened airs of Waikiki.

corrinne clegg hales

fresno

THE GLASSBLOWER'S BREATH

I can almost see his breath
through the blurred green glass

of this antique float, what's left
of one person a century

after death. I wonder
if he thought of his work

as art—if he sighed as he set
each globe to cool, pleased to have made

a beautiful thing— or if it was
simply more work,

like stacking crates or sweeping
floors. Strung together, the floats

must have looked like clusters
of fish eggs, riding on the sea, holding

their heavy nets up and open wide,
biding their time. Here, in my backyard

pond, a single green globe
carries the blower's ancient breath

in slow circles, a fragile
casket, on fire in the morning sun.

The big fish nose around, pushing,
shoving, nibbling, and the dark fry

dart into the dense roots
of a water hyacinth or the tangle

of parrot feather sprouting
on the surface, hiding from their own

parents' appetites. Each spring, I watch
new fish hatch in a shallow dish

of pond water under a microscope
in my kitchen. The eggs are clear

amber orbs at first, then two huge eyes
like dark yolks appear, then a thin line

that will become vein and spine
and motion. The creature

defines itself as you watch: a tail
materializes, twitches, begins to push

at the confines of the egg. Curled
tight, it seems all eyes and tail,

then suddenly you are aware
of a pulse, a pink smear

of a heart, telegraphing
its urgent message of platelets

along the vein, and the thing flips,
thrashes until it bursts the skin of the egg

and wriggles out, transparent
as glass, not a fish yet—but something

hungry and alive. The glassblower
had to know just how much molten glass

to scoop onto the pipe's end, just how hard
to blow. His breath would push

the hot, glowing blob out into its thinning
roundness, make a soft whooshing

or humming inside the long pipe, and when
he sealed off the end, his breath

would be caught, sound and all, in this
new translucent body. If it breaks,

I'm afraid he will disappear, die again,
or maybe he will be reborn, halfway

around the world from where
he started, sucking in air,

defining the full shape of his lungs, his heart,
his flesh, and blowing it all back

one long breath at a time
into the hungry open mouth of this world.

HECTOGRAPH: WORDS RISING

My mother struggles for a word
she's known all her life, and her fingers
move to her mouth as if to pull
the word from her body
like a thorn, but she waits—
just as she used to wait
for the words to appear in her
homemade copy machine.
She'd boil sugar and gelatin in water, add
glycerin, stirring down the foam
in wide circles, and finally pour
the syrupy concoction
into a flat roasting pan to cool. She'd type
a page full of purple words
and place the carbon face down
onto the transparent surface of gelatin.
When the words had sunk in
deep enough, she'd spread a white sheet
of paper on top, smooth it
with the back of a serving spoon,
and we'd all wait for her words
to swim back up through the wobbly medium
onto the page—which she'd hold up
for our amazement, printed as clear and bold
as anything—and soon the tables and chairs,
even the floor, would be covered
with pages drying, words hung
everywhere, cooked up like supper
by my mother's hand.

philip levine

fresno

BLOOD

My brother wakens in the back room
just before dawn and hears branches
clicking against the upstairs windows.
Late summer of '45 and he's home
from a war. He's waiting for the light
to flood the room when a voice cries out,
my voice in dreams. Later that day
he and I will tramp through the fields
at the edge of town while the grass
blows around us. He won't ask
if the cry he heard was mine; instead
he'll follow me into the shaded woods
where I go evening after evening
to converse with tangled roots and vines.
Others come in pairs in winter
to breathe the frozen sky, in spring
for the perfumes of earth, girls and boys
in search of themselves. I show my brother
a tight nest of broken eggs, a fresh hole
the field mice dug. The dark begins
to collect between branches, the winds
rise until the woods moan the day's end.
We turn for home talking of plans
for the year ahead. It's still summer
though the seasons blow around us—
rain and sleet waiting in the graying air
we breathe—, the future coming
towards us in the elm's black shadow,
two brothers—almost one man—
held together by what we can't share.

pákatelas

memory iv

What can be remembered about Andrés Montoya is his faith that poetry could change the world. In this, his hope was no different than that of Czeslaw Milosz, the Nobel Laureate who asked, facing the tough task of the reconstruction of Poland after WW II, "What is a poetry that cannot save nations or a people?" This was Montoya's attitude too. He wanted for his poetry not to be studied within ivied walls or read in drawing rooms, but to be proclaimed in the fields and in the streets where people worked, in the camps and houses where they lived. He wanted poetry that would be a force for the future and that would bring pride and spirit to those whose lives might otherwise be bereft of them. He had the heart of a champion in this way, the vision of a liberator, and the intolerance and impatience of a revolutionary. He brooked no compromises—in politics or in poetry—and wanted from both that they work for practical change in the lives of the oppressed. It was difficult being his "teacher," as he seemed to think it absurd that poetry could be taught. Yet, he learned, and so did I. Viva Montoya! Montoya presente!

Garrett Hongo

CONTEMPLACIONES DEL CONCRETO

#1 cicatriz

nací del concreto
y de la sal del mar. mis manos
son corteza de árbol y mi boca
arroja pestes de alcantarilla.
tú eres hermosura
tengo miedo de decirlo.
¿cómo amarás al asfalto
grietas y polvo
que te sonríen?

#2 TEMOR

no sé nada del amar.
sé del horario de autobuses,
como se escriben poemas el los
respaldos a modo de ley acusándome
de mi cojera patética.

sé cómo ver a un hombre a los ojos
sólo para decirle, "i'm ready for you, punk!"

o cómo se ve la muerte
tirada en la calle
debajo de una sábana blanca blanca.

traté de amar alguna vez
pero terminé dando puñetazos
a todos.

¿qué puedes tú
hacer por mí? ¿lo ves?
hasta las preguntas me
salen mal.

tu aliento es demasiado dulce;
aléjate.

3 VOZ

"ven
recuéstate conmigo

los tiros del arma
aún estarán allí
después que hayas aprendido
la lección de mi beso

descansa conmigo
aquí en el piso

te estoy cantando

qué no es más lindo
que una vara lanzada
desde una chevy
perdida rodando
por el vecindario

ven
déjame
pronunciar
tu nombre".

Translated by Verónica E. Guajardo

From *The Iceworker Sings and Other Poems* (Bilingual Press, 1999)
(Translation of "contemplations from concrete: nine movements," pages 67–75)

memory v –– Moments Gone

This poet had once been a football player who tore opposing players' hamstrings, poked their eyes through facemasks, and, when hidden at the bottom of a pileup, grabbed unmercifully for their testicles. He was thrown out of too many games to count – suspended, benched, left snarling on the sidelines. The Fowler Wildcats suffered his absence; referees breathed sighs of relief.

I was his baby brother. He would grab me by the shoulders and get right in my face, his wide flat nose inches from mine. Eyes bulging, he'd say, "There are TWO things between you and me: air and fear." Then he'd blow real hard and say, "There goes the air." A thousand times he must have told this joke – except he wasn't joking.

We drove slowly along random dark streets. We talked about girls. I told him I didn't like to dance, and he told me that wasn't a problem, that he didn't like to either. He imparted some advice: all you had to do was stand looking real cool, tapping your foot, and maybe, if the beat moved you, snap your fingers. I asked him, "What about the girl?" This giant of a man, too big for the hatchback car he was driving, turned to me and smiled, "Well, she'll just dance around you." I told him about this girl I liked, but that I didn't know how to tell her. He asked me to describe our relationship. He relished the details as only a storyteller can, banging his fist against the steering wheel when something was particularly savory, exclaiming, "Yes! Yes! You're in it!" Then he shared how he'd once told a girl his feelings. For six weeks he had studied her hands, paying attention to the wrinkles of her knuckles, the lines of her palm, the cuticles on her fingertips. He examined them, admiring their grace, finding beauty in their defects. And then he wrote a poem about what he had observed, what he'd learned from her hands. "I read it to her," he said. "And when I finished I knew she was mine."

I was there the day he went to pick up his manuscript at some copy place in Fresno. Afterward, we went to a juice shop and he made me drink a shot of wheat grass. Then we had an argument about religion. He called me a self–righteous hypocritical little shit. This might as well have been his nickname for me. Following the juice shop, we went to the post office and he mailed the manuscript. "For some contest," he said. I like to think it was the contest he won, the prize his published manuscript.

I cry for him often. For our loss, for the incomprehensibleness of his death, still, after all these years, as raw as the days of his sickness, when he lost his brilliance and along with it the will to live; as raw as the days and months following his death when I was unprepared to deal with his absence. I am still unprepared. Without God or a belief in an afterlife, I must cope alone, must try to understand what can't be understood: our existence so incomplete, death so utterly complete in its end. But when I pick up Andres's words he returns. I understand him, or at least a part of the world he saw. I go on to another poem, and he emerges again, his life, his vision. When he died his existence became a series of moments, of conversations, his entire life compressed into a handful of memories. There are some that I never forgot, others that returned to me with time. It is for this reason I believe we create art, why we must paint and write and tell stories. You take the conversations somewhat forgotten, the moments gone, the persons dead, the memories just pieces, and you reconstruct a life: yours, someone you loved, someone who never existed but who now exists because you willed it.

I remember at my grandmother's funeral when Andres read the poem "luciana: this is how i see you." I remember the explosion of energy as he read those words aloud, the power of his voice, the images beautiful in their specificity. In so few lines he conjured up an entire life and resurrected our grandmother one last time – resurrected, then set her to rest.

Maceo Montoya

Pákatelas

by Andrés Montoya
from the posthumous manuscript, *Universe, Breath and All.* Forthcoming.

this is a coyote's
song–
my song,

the confused guitar
wearing the banjo's mask

on the third
corner
of my dreams,

my eyelids escaping

over pyramids
and mountains,
in boats
over oceans and clouds:

my father's cheek
always speaks tewa

and his eyes are singing
from five
hills in durango.

but his tongue
has amnesia.

his songs
are gathered

from
neither
english thighbones
nor
spanish marrow

but from somewhere
in between.

pero donde?

él dijo
–me vine desde allá
and i found myself
enredado
con cercos de alambre,
don't they know
que mi madre
es la tierra?–

and i must be his
son.
my eyes are
not quite
bastards

but homeless

in tierra
that, perhaps,

once
was
called
aztlán
or not.

but i
too
am from
in between.

“everywhere
and
nowhere”
tattooed below
my belly’s
apex.

there are no spaces

between borders
and it is in the spaceless
that i find my lips

shuddering
people

césar
ruben
cuahtemoc
gabriela
llorona
tiny y smokey
shy girl and monstro and chuy and boobi.

i find myself
in song
assaulting
the streets,

singing,
“i am large

i contain
multitudes,"

as if i was
busting out
cumbia style,
"pákatelas
pákatelas
pákatelas
da da da–ran"
with a line i saw scrawled
on a wall in pinedale.

but this is the question
always calling up
from the angry craters
of *calles*,

-as if it mattered, this birth of breath into word–

when was it that poems came crawling

from the lonely
recesses of my
gut?

was it the sea salt
kiss
of the sky
that became
my
muse?

or

was it
the murals of madness

whispering,
running out
from the stiff brush
of my father's mind
onto the walls
of the free clinics
in east
oak town?

This is all i know:

i came patiently behind
devouring the poverty
of my mother's spoon,

waiting
for my father
to
return
from the sea,

ringlets dangling from his nose
in the latest
revolutionary
fashion,
a silver faced
che
or
zapata,
pecked with beautiful slogans
like wind.

i came patiently behind
running as fast as I could
from the phantom of hair

and tongue-less feet
that kept

threatening
from the
left

and
i found myself in the forest
speaking to pigs
whose squeals opened to the sky
like a peach
opens
its
anguish

to the wild starvation
of ants.

was this the first poem?

the vernacular
of flying
and crawling things?

we found ourselves
–my family and i–

in slow sludge
groaning
with our ojos covered
by the peels of green mangos,

kneeling by a cross
cripped
by a preacher's glass eye.

there, undaunted, in the land of the mutes
my grandmother
placed her hands

into
clouds
like masa

begging breath
from
a pierced foot.

still, the shattered
elbow

of night

kept calling
with its
subtle teeth
of despair.
we hid in the trees
finding
the first roaches
laughing
like
sasquach.

there I was schooled in the academy
of mud and fear.
there i learned the honeyed face
of sobs
babbling like brooks.

but when was it
that poetry pounded
itself
from between my lips
my sorrow
my hate,
past the club foot of my soul

and my toltec eyebrow?
it must have been
at the first church
that poetry wiggled
its way up my throat.

it began
at five,
at exactly five years,
at exactly five in the afternoon,
under the pines
next

to the house of hogs
where i had discussed
the riddle
of dove work.

the petrified
sequoia
behind the red house
became my brother's
pulpit
and i ushered

our neighborhood
friends
to rug samples
setup
as legless pews.

my brother preached Jesus
and how only he
could save us

from the soured breath
of sasquach

and the cockroaches
who had hoisted
our lives onto their backs.
we all knew
the olive garden
of night,

how the beekeeper's boy

found foot prints
burrowed

into mud and needles
outside his wild window

prints bigger than the beekeeper's boots.

at the first church
us kids
shouted amens
and hallelujahs
to the jammin'
groove of grace
that bounced out
from my brother's
beautiful mouth

and
i would clap
and shake my legs
in rhythm
to tunes
only i heard.

there i began to notice
words,
words like zacatecas

and seraphim,
like kentucky
and jericho
echoing
off the cheek
of everything
into song.

there, at the first church,
poetry began.

II

this is a coyote's
song

my song

stinging
the soft underbelly
of lies.

i breathe.
my eyes blink
boldly.

this is not
insanity's tight skirt,
the maniac's love song.

my throat vibrates
from boats
and land.

sometimes i

sing

with my spanish
eyebrow,

but always
my tewa nostrils
demand to know
the meaning of song
and flor
y
canto,

demand to know
the genesis

of things:

once, i was standing
in clouds
liking

the concrete of
my life.

i found birds whistling

from the south

corner of a slanged heart.

and the songs
could be heard
bouncing

PÁKATELAS

off the brick walls
of chinatown.

i've been here
in this maze
ever since.
all the trees are gone
and i'm left wondering

how was it
that we came here?

on boats?
trains?
horses?
in cars, hoopties
on highway five
or sixty-six?

i think –and this has to be the truth
there are no other
explanations—

the streets
slowly goose stepped
onto the scene.

the wild hairs
of power lines
and phone lines
lip
the sky
like schizoid
orders,

others barking up
from the farmer's chest,

a huge beautiful chest
covered with
banana breath
and leaves

and, you know, there is the laughter
of muñecos

menacing radio park,

a mother masking
her smile

to scold
a funny
boy
bounding around

like a tiger.

radio park
clinton
first
alabama
muscogee

streets
styling
'round the park
'round the junkies
pink bathroom
that neighbor's
the
POET'S ASSOCIATION ART GALLERY:
(this is how i learned about the armed propaganda of words bombing the streets)
"O, distinguished colleagues of the rhythmic rhyme of images,
I wrote this poem about the battle for our integrity

after teaching my class on the most holy universality
of Shakespeare and the Whitman Rhythm of the Self
Please. . .bow your heads:

'O, poetry
save us
with your iconoclastic
wall of faces.

O, poetry
of the holy hooded
order, deliver us
from the evil
of code switchers
and the bad poetry
of the nezahuacoyotl
types who don't
belong here anyway."

this is when my sister
starts scatting'
on the corner
of the world.

she explains
everything
with the be–bop
bounce of the hip–hopsters,
bubblegum
and nines
blasting
through the air.
entiendes, mendez?
here, let me give it up,

the whole canela stick,
the secrets of horchatain
order:

there were no theories
to explain the poverty
of leño lopez's limp.

and the cops never
found the cockroaches
that stole his hope

on the afternoon
that he learned
to carry his eyes

in pockets
that don't stain
with pain.

i'm tired of photos
so when leño leapt
into the final
sigh
and discovered himself

swinging
from shoelaces and fear

I left my camera at home.

listen, o beautiful
reader,

the
streets
slowly stomped
onto
the scene.

this is how it must have happened:

corner by corner
i fell in love.
pound's mural

of the wet
black
boughs
on the sixth street wall.

but still
my tongue coiled
slowly around
the sad slouch of his justice.

still I carried neruda
in my back pocket
like a grip of coins.

on eighth street
never
williams displayed
spanish tongue
his pieces
in a glass gallery

and i wept
for the beauty
of green shards
and wheelbarrows

on tenth street
i was astonished to see
suits pushing Shakespeare
in needles to schools
you

bold breath

– I never knew, carnal. they

told us of your

of the rolling r's

Guillermo, i love

you have wonderful

but they've dressed
you up
in a miniskirt and
heels
and put you on the
corner
of their alabaster
politics.

i want to change
your name
to billy bad boy
dress you in creased
dickies and a winos
and teach you the
language
of my tío locos's
pachuco priesthood–

they were beautiful,
but always
they existed on top
or below
on avenues and highways,
and I stuttered
at the
opera
of their exhaust–
ing lines.

i like salsa
and salt.

so i found my way to the side streets
of the barrio,

where Miguel
still sliced
onions
and was respected
for it.

where el maestro valley joe
still called out his spanish
volunteers.
there i found i could discuss
the lines

left by the crushed juice
of a stepped on orange

there i understood
the rhythmic rings
of my slaughtered ear
drums.

i knew all about the cop's wrought iron hand of justice
and the pale poverty of the child's tongue murdered in the officialdom of lies.

i only wanted to understand
hope
as if hope was saying,

"hoy sufro sola–
mente."

i wanted to understand the code
switching pyramids
of my mestizo tongue

still tied to boats
in the gulf.

I wanted to understand madness
of my own divided

cheeks.

so I began to make up my songs:

the sun comes
making its declarations
of light
while shadows,
cheekless
shyly make their stand.

the busted eye of a green plymouth winks by
and a little boy
imagines God,
universe breath and all,
considering onion–like
street curbs
lullabying children.

i sang,

here they came
with their draculian
thirst
and murdered
the moon
with conquest.

i wanted to understand the peacock
feather
of truth
like the peacock
feather

of
truth.

here. vato. here.

the streets slowly stay the same.

i look at my mother's knee

and realize
someone
has stolen
his shakespearean
saunter.
(the irish too must have wept at the famished potato of his soul)

i consider my father's

beautiful face,

and his eyes conveniently seem to sing:

"o, poetry
of norte America
you are the syphilitic
whore
beautiful
on belmont avenue

only
when the sun
and moon
have conspired

to leave us

in streetlamps of darkness.

you pretend
to be healthy

as if
your teeth
were not chipped
and crawling
with the black hole
of lies
waiting
to suck
up
the truth.
you recite
the vallejos amd nerudas and daríos
hikmets and castillos

while
assassinating their
lips

on the faces of shy children.

you betray the word
with a kiss.

o, poetry
of norte America

tu escribes libros
de las maneras
de amar,
o, imperialismo dulce–

while spreading your legs

for the cucarachas."

i consider your face, too
poetry
and discover it a bit scared
and beautiful.

i consider you
norte america
and i am wounded.

i love to sing
but
am

frightened
by your regional
teeth.

america
i sing
america.

i sing you
water and rock
earth and sky,
america.
i sing, *america.*

america, i sing. . .

Contributors

Maceo Montoya
José Montoya
Juan Felipe Herrera
Garrett Hongo
Philip Levine
Corrinne Clegg Hales
Rigoberto González
Lee Herrick
Tim Z. Hernandez
Sasha Pimentel Chacón
Javier Huerta
Sheryl Luna
Craig Perez
Mónica Teresa Ortiz
Marisol Baca
Kenneth R. Chacón
Oscar Bermeo
Paul López
David Dominguez
Ramón García
Daniel A. Olivas
David Hurst
James Espinoza
Mike Maniquiz
Ted O'Connell
John B. Boyd
David Good
Teresa Tarazi
Augustine F. Porras
Verónica E. Guajardo
Michael Luis Medrano
Steve Yarbrough

Featuring: "Pákatelas," by Andrés Montoya
from the unpublished, forthcoming
Universe, Breath and All

In the Grove
(inthegrove.net)
ISSN 1536-1551