Desde el Taller

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Hoy he visto desde arriba

Por Ángel Carrión Tavárez

Hoy he visto desde arriba las estrellas,
Los techos de metal, los edificios,
El vértigo indulgente de la espera
Y el silencio más claro, el mío mismo.

Hoy he escuchado los rezos de mi madre,
El cuervo y la paloma. En los tendidos,
He cantado lo que quizá otro hable,
Y he sido el mayor muerto de los vivos.

¿Qué pruebas o qué golpes da la vida
O el azar o el destino o Dios! De pronto,
Tan vehementes que ladrán y muerden.

Y, en resumen, la rara rogativa...

¿Qué mucha fe o qué poca y qué mal signo,
El mirarle a los ojos y no verle!
América

Más allá de tus senos
donde se clavaron estas cruces
que hieren como estacas,
más allá de tu frágil cintura
y de tu espesura,
más allá de tu geografía
de tu historia,
de tu destino,
más allá del tiempo
habitás en mí,
formas parte
de mi propio destino.

Yo soy el rostro de todos tus hijos,
los buenos y los malos,
los miserables y los dichosos,
los de ayer y los de hoy.

Cuando me aparto de ti
comprendo que eres
mi propia esencia,
cargo contigo
sus años tristes
con tus plazas ensangrentadas,
cargo también con tu misteriosa belleza,
soy tus paisajes soleados,
soy tus frutos,
soy también tu gran ilusión.
By Eduardo Arocho

Cameras, Satellites
Capturing on t.v. sets
a million stars
on a million banderas
marching to face
the world on stage.

From cities throughout
the fifty stars
colorful children leave
civil war behind
to unite at the palace white
and sing an ode to
soldiers who left home
and loved ones for war.

Long before the century began
before the Puerto Rican flag
before 18 nine eight
when a boat named Maine
sunk in flames
yankees then sailed to borinken
the Spanish fled
four isles they left
for old Glory to claim
and complete her imperial rein.

Prepare a victory parade!
A soldier said—today
history is being made
while McKinley and Miles
salute the star spangled crown
Aguila Blanca sube Bandera
above the jibaro hills and clouds of Guánica.

Tell us more old unknown soldier
asked the colorful children
tell us more stories of war.

Ode to: Soldiers of
The One Hundred Years War

Taino Resistance, mural of Association House—West Town, Chicago
My grandmother is a beautiful woman who has lived a difficult life. She saw her husband, Félix Zamora, murdered on May 12, 1940. She raised their eighteen children alone, out of whom: Trini died of a hemorrhage during the birth of one of her own children. Lupe was murdered by his "friends" that were hired by la política in Tizapán. María died of an ulcer. Jesusita disappeared and her life and death remain unknown. Ramón was shot in the back and killed when he swore revenge for his brother’s death. José, too, swore revenge and was slaughtered by a regime of soldiers in his home and dragged through the streets by a horse after his death. To avoid further retribution, la política also murdered Felipe and his brother Félix. Lola ran away with a soldier and started a family.

Clementina and Elisa both died of natural causes. Natalio died as a baby from complications shortly after birth. Lupita died of small pox when she was only a child. Miguel died of a heart attack. My grandmother has out lived all but four of her children and when I ask her how she finds the strength to continue, she says: "Never cry for the dead. They have gone to a better place. Cry for the living who have to stay here and suffer."

By Adrián Arroyo
1st Prize for a poem in English
First Annual Latino Poetry Contest
DePaul University