

## YOLANDA THE POWERFUL

tatiana de la tierra

She called me diosa one day  
And I believed her  
I mean, she was a librarian  
She wrote encyclopedia entries  
Archived important papers  
Surely, she was an authority on diosas

She called me too powerful another day  
I believed her then too  
Because look at her  
Eyeglasses held together with a band-aid  
Pointing her finger  
At the American Library Association man  
Yelling, "Why do you keep certifying library schools  
When they don't have instructors of color  
When they don't include us in the curriculum?"  
The administrator stammered and ran off  
As Yolanda barked at his heels.

She told me to be on some panel with her  
And I went and so did the others she invited  
Because, as she said,  
the Joint Conference on Librarians of Color  
Lacked lesbian and gay representation

We had to fill that gap  
 We had to challenge our own people  
 We had to tell our stories  
 And when she told hers  
 It was mine too  
 How we use the bibliographic system  
 To make us last forever

She glared at me when I voted to expand  
 The NACCS lesbian caucus  
 And almost slugged a UCLA professor  
 In the lobby of a hotel in Miami  
 Fuming at the thought of  
 Bisexuals queers trans et al  
 Invading the lesbians  
 The sacred of the sacred  
 The purest the holiest the la-las  
 Our Latina lesbian paradise on earth

She wanted me to give her my archives  
 Don't give them to those boys, she said  
 What do they know about lesbians  
 How will they understand your la-la land  
 How will they catalog you  
 How will they assign finding aids to you  
 When will they process you  
 What if they de-lesbianize you  
 What if they don't care about you  
 Like I do

And even though I didn't give them to her  
--At least not yet--  
I believed her  
No one will care about my papers  
More than Yolanda  
Because when I gave her some  
For the One Archive years ago  
She asked me to make them give them back years later  
So she could have them at her archive in UCLA  
You gave those papers to me, she said  
Not to them  
And she was right

One day she saw the pain in my heart  
From a recent breakup  
And made me cry  
One day she told me to quit being a  
Difficult diva  
One day she called me diosa  
And one day I noticed that  
She called everyone else diosa too

Yes we are all diosas, Yolanda  
And so are you  
Yolanda la poderosa  
Yolanda who always treated me proper  
Even when she disapproved

Yolanda who meant well  
--Is that too small to say?—  
Who always thought big  
Who put boys in their place  
Who watched out for all of us

Hasta la próxima, mi diosa  
Aquí me quedo on earth  
In la-la land  
Growing in your light.

*30 de agosto del 2007, Inglewood, califas*