

ESTAMOS HOMELESS

para Sandra Cisneros

Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs

Compañera homeless

escritora of the free word

the NAFTA word

you cannot only speak with ink, as you told me

like commercials, desgajando, a good movie

you know about the times people befriend you only to turn your hands inside out but you

know that the gloves of all vocaciones, oficios, may help ours

palpar your full hands made of Masaharina

like the touching of a steering wheel

one has to palpar

the traveling flour/flower, of migrants,

of nostalgic migrants like your father

You, who have made Tongolele familia,

incarcerated in our minds the goodness of fathers who can forgive,

need familia

Your penned laser

disappears the red varicose veins and broken capillaries of stereotypes,

running on the legs of the Statue of Liberty

like innocent criminals about to be caught

“the Mexicans are like this” or “like that”

of inked imaginary Mexicans

Your “slip was showing” and we did not tell you hurt you are on the occasion-
we are hurt

on the occasion

We could not let you flop your tiredness,

like a piece of recently made chorizo upon our table,

because we are important, too impatiently important

we ordered your books for 20 years at a time

like eating corn chips, they passed

and you were ours,

our only Mexican published by Knopf

Your authenticity

like chicken in a “shake and bake bag” already caught

With it, we powdered our minds into believing we are important, and you, “the maestra”

cannot fail us on a summer afternoon when we could all have been elsewhere

Now in my glasses without glass, months later

I see you close up

in pain

No necesito aumento para ver

tu sufrimiento

I say to myself, it should have been me to stand up and say:

“this watermelon is seedless—may the seeds go nowhere...”

“Sandra don’t talk to us like that, we hurt!”

Our Sor Juana is insulting us and we are dressed up for loving

as Fridas who have hung up their crosses on Lent,

the stairway under our feet is moving,

we can only go up,
your pain is staining our hearts!
Don't speak! Don't say I don't want to be here!
Sor Juana, shut up!
our older sisters made us a vestido de domingear, Sunday dress, to come see you,
our recovered Frida
without thorns
we've come to see the sad look in your successful eyes—sad for others not for us
sad for us not for Good Morning America
echando la lengua sad, tiredness misunderstood
tiredness misunderstood as mad and despreciativa,
lonely successful sad, nobody to talk to about success in your jaula de oro de mujer,
única,
estamos homeless sad

We need to help you
with the cross of
globalization!

Note

At the 2003 MALCS Summer Institute and Conference in San Antonio, Texas, Sandra Cisneros and Norma Alarcón were featured in a special event entitled "Entre Lágrimas y Risas: Una Plática with Norma Alarcón." This conversation was one of the highlights of the conference and took place in an auditorium filled with Chicana/Latina scholars. Cisneros and Alarcón had a tumultuous and unconscionable interview that Alarcón tried to improve with humor. Cisneros stated that she did not want to be there, she would rather be writing, and that she did not get anything from "YOU" (the audience). She said, "You are always taking from me" and "You don't give me anything." The audience was left distraught.