

## MOTHER, FATHER, CHILD OF THE AMERICAS

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It is raining in Can Serrat, orange  
fruit in the trees outside my window drips  
honey into the cracks of blue tiles below,  
a mosaic with words like Yoko Ono and Electric Boogie.  
So, when my friend Nova, says, “Have fun in the Fatherland,”  
equating Spain with dad-like things—order,  
tweed jackets, or shaving tools lined on a towel—this father  
seems incongruent with the motherly oil-scented water on my window.

We’ve just come back from Montserrat, the phenomenal  
mountain range with impossible trails and religious artifacts.  
We artists talk of the Spanish conquest, painfully  
attempt to reconcile the blood-moistened soils of the Americas,  
the mixture that made the bricks of the monastery the monks hoped  
would raise them up to God.

How could our mother, España, treat us so cruelly? Selfish  
luxury abounds on the streets of Barcelona, gold rococo, surrealist  
curves in glass,  
decadence we, too, now enjoy, at the price of ancestral slaves.

Or, maybe, no. Perhaps, this country of cured meats and wines isn’t our  
mother, but  
is our *child*, the true child of the Americas, a baby wrapped in blue seas  
and marble cathedrals.

MOTHER, FATHER, CHILD OF THE AMERICAS

We fed it guavas and corn, nursed it into cheerful peace to the rhythms  
of the Amazon,  
let it suckle on the breast of rainstorms and coconut milk. We love our child,  
combed its hair with translucent shells and dusted its face with sand-powder. We  
spun its clothes with the sparkling salt of our oceans and our jaguar taught it  
pride and fierceness. Oh, yes, she is our child, and we raised her well,  
neglecting our own needs, letting our lands wither, get dusty with wrinkles  
and exhaustion.

I know this is true because I have seen how my own mother has given herself  
to the point of neglect, letting her daughter shine in fancy dresses and degrees.  
Who gets the credit for familial sacrifice? The fanciful child, so pretty in satin, or  
la madre que sacrifica su último kilo para que su hija tenga lo mejor del mundo?  
We want both the sacrificial mother and the spoiled child. Don't we? Both  
the plain nun who forgives all our sins and the princess garbed in "borrowed"  
jewels and a sly wink.

Oh, to have for one day the Americas in cloaks of royalty! But she'd never.  
She is la monja who gives and gives and gives so that all will fall in love  
with her hija,  
the bitch who never feels guilty about wearing the diamonds of conflict.