



La Señora Roosevelt Visits el West Side

“Altogether, I feel that I have seen a good deal this morning.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt on her visit to San Antonio’s West Side, March 18, 1939

She has come to see for herself the deep poverty she so abhors—the disease, the poorly-fed, the squalor, here in the city’s Mexican quarter, where too many are like the impoverished in Appalachia—but they at least have those verdant hills, those glistening streams, all that lush nature. Here the creeks are mere ditches, filled with lurid urban debris. Under rickety huts resting on aging posts, young boys toss fruit filled with poison for vermin that scurry across unpaved streets. She will meet an Italian priest who cares for these brown-skinned olvidados, the long-forgotten who have been dealt a raw deal.

On this delightfully warm March morning I have seen another America, and I am not proud. There is a good deal of work to be done here, Franklin, where I have seen much that troubles me, much that cleaves the spirit. Centuries ago, the Spanish stood frozen, in awe of the majesty they saw in that Aztec empire. Today I too stood in shock: that kingdom’s children now living in shacks with no plumbing, no dignity—thousands of them, teeming, life setting on them nightly, setting on dreams gleaming in other mothers’ sleep.

—Pablo Miguel Martínez

CREDIT: This poem originally appeared in Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review. It is reprinted here by permission of the author.



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¡Felicidades, Vocab! San Antonio Poet Laureate, 2020-2022

San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg and the Department of Arts & Culture have announced Andrea “Vocab” Sanderson as San Antonio’s new Poet Laureate. Sanderson will serve as the City’s fifth Poet Laureate for a two-year term from 2020-2022. The Esperanza board, staff and Buena gente congratulate Andrea “Vocab” Sanderson and look forward to a term full of wondrous activities. ¡Adelante, Vocab!

