



The Bus, 1929 by Frida Kahlo

Waiting with Juana

What they whisper is true.
I do not eat mangoes
or avocados or sprinkle
chili powder on fruit.
Years ago, I gave away
the prior renter's grill,
not trying even once
to use it. Most telling of all,
my front door lacks a sign
to ward off Jehovahs:
"No Solicitors,"
"Beware of Dog,"
"This home is Catholic."
(Where I live, Jehovahs
do not know English.
Since I speak no Spanish,
I guess I am fine.)

Neighbors may laugh or stare,
but I like it here. Most people

in life turn out to be nice.
At the bus stop, I listen
to Cristo Rey's bells play
"Ave Maria" and "De Colores,"
two hymns once new to me
that I now hear on waking,
before lunch, after supper.
My house has thin walls.

Sweet, sixtyish, she tells
me her name is Juana.
She wears fuzzy pink slippers,
a sky-blue sweatshirt.
When she pleads for bus fare,
she is so childlike, so innocent,
I fumble in my purse for change,
return fare included. She asks
would I care to see her necklace.
I coo, "Yes, I'd love to!"
A family member, I think,

has bought her a chain
at Family Dollar or Walgreen's

Drawing the necklace
gently from the V
of her blue sweatshirt,
she pauses, then asks
out of nowhere,
apropos of nothing,
if I am Jewish. As I stammer,
laughing, no, not Jewish,
the sun catches a corner
of the crucifix, flashing fire,
causing the earth to wobble,
the blue sky to reel, tilt. I wonder
in what rose-
scented country we reside,
what haunted crossroads
we have come to,

if the high-pitched brakes
of the stealthy bus
might be the whinnies
of horses ridden
by well-heeled men
who wield the power
to pose questions,
get answers. Perhaps,
too, this power
is vested in Juana,
who sweetly tells me
I can be a Jew, an atheist,
or—she looks at me—
anything. She does not care.
She would show the necklace,
she says, to anyone.

—Rachel Jennings

Poetry in Motion

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Poetry in motion
is knowing objects
can be restored & replaced
fall into our lives
as need be.

Is knowing that music beckons
& the body will dance
though age & missteps
will often require
a tortured tango
or two.

Is knowing
that deep deep deep
hay una semilla
a mustard seed
& those of us
who speak down there know

a thing or two
of right & wrong
sin & just is
which can be
dare I say it?

Poetry in motion
is pain & constant hope
is a new creed of strength
& not antiquated words
safe from beads & baubles
smoke & mirrors.

Let's just say we know
those of us who know
we know when our life is right
we know when it is wrong
& we do not fear.

We see the unlit path
& are not blind
We do not need to know
exactly where we are going
or what we are doing
though if we must give it a name
we will call it
poetry in motion.

—Yon Hui Bell



The Magic World of the Mayans, 1963-1964 by Leonora Carrington