



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