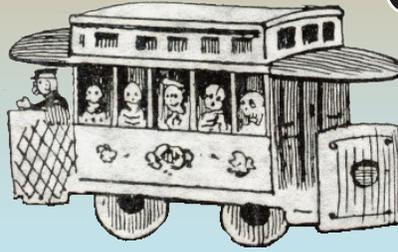




# Día de los Muertos



Through Love We Visit Our Ancestors

2022



We have been thrown on this bus  
like rotten fruit. My abuelita is asleep  
on my shoulder making little puffing  
sounds as if she were running.  
Just looking at her makes me smile.  
She has always been my home,  
my safety even as we ride through  
the night on this damn bus.

Abuelita is restless and moving  
in her sleep. Her beautiful gray  
mane of hair has been twisted loose.  
It cascades across my arm like  
a treasure. Her sleeping face  
carries lessons of survival.

We make no stops on this traveling coffin.  
People have vomited across the aisle  
and onto their seats. The miasma of the  
unknown rises around our heads.  
I look out the window at my ghost  
looking back at me. I hope it isn't an omen.

I cradle  
my abuelita with my arms,  
turn my face toward her, take in  
the smell of my country in her hair.

“Juanita,” my abuelita has said over  
and over “time is traveling with us  
on this bus as are the dead souls of  
our ancestors. The weight of our  
heritage holds us together. We should  
be constructing an ofrenda so our dead  
loved ones can gather. How will we  
do this?” These words of concern  
strike at my heart.

But she doesn't know while she slept  
I have made flowers from gum wrappers  
discovered on the streets where we  
traveled. Also, I unearthed from a trash can,  
a half eaten box of orange candy.

And have drawn Día de los Muertos  
images on the striped paper  
I uncovered in my purse.

The Sun comes up just as the  
‘metal can’ we ride in has found a city.  
The warmth from the Sun makes my  
abuelita stir. Her magic body turns  
toward the light and she smiles.  
Then she remembers where we are,  
“Juanita, how can we celebrate the dead  
when we have nothing?”

I pull from my purse the flowers made  
from gum wrappers and place them  
in her lap, the orange candy follows  
and then the drawings for Día de los  
Muertos,

Abuelita jumps up and down clapping  
her hands in excitement. The light  
from her eyes could blind the Sun.

—Jeanie Sanders



## Las calaveras de San Antonio

En este pueblo hay muchas calaveras  
Hay de todas clases: bonitas, feitas,  
pobres, riquitas, tristes y alegres.  
Hay muchas calacas por todo San Anto:  
bailando por las calles y también llorando  
siempre buscando a ese ser amado,  
y parece que nunca se encuentran,  
será por eso que siempre andan rodando.  
Pero, también hay unas que si se encuentran,

pero tienen que buscar en todos los altares,  
aquellos altares con tantos recuerdos de familiares.  
Si aquella calaca le gustaban los taquitos de carne—  
hay que buscar el altar con aquellos taquitos de carne!  
Y que no se les olvide aquella cervecita: la Lone Star  
y la Perla, aunque tengan que ir hasta Ft. Worth ,  
¡O mandar traerla.!

—Mildred DeLong Hilbrich

