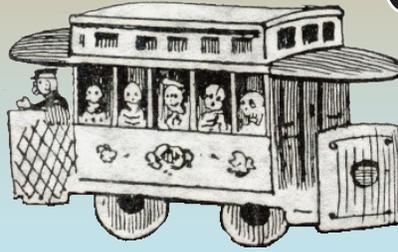




Día de los Muertos



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 Dia 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 Dia 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 tambien llorando siempre buscando a ese ser amado, y parece que nunca se encuentran, será por eso que siempre andan rodando. Pero, tambien 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

