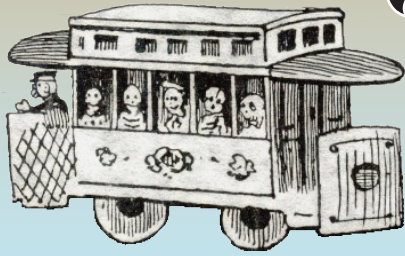




Día de los Muertos



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

