

Los Restos

The Man Who Sleeps in the Graveyard

He was brought to America when he was four the man who sleeps in the graveyard. There is his blanket and there the stone place he rests. He feels God is watching out for him among the dead. It is safer here he says. No one to hassle you. At night he takes comfort from the silence that seems to whisper words that rhyme in his dreams. His two American born children talk to him across thousands of miles. "Don't give up" they say. "Don't cry". "Don't despair".

With tears streaking down his face, dropping off his chin, and falling on the tops of his shoes he tells whoever will listen that this is the hardest thing he has ever done. He is a felon now because he was caught trying to recross the river to see his children. He says he wishes he were dead. He doesn't even know where the streets go. These words spoken with such desperation are flung out among the dead for they alone really listen.

While he lays curled in sleep the graveyard ghosts ask among the quiet "Why hate a people established in a country hundreds of years before you were"? "Why hate a people that have crossed and recrossed over the same land for thousands of years"? But there is no answer.

— Jeanie Sanders

An Aria of Love's Loss

You stood at the sink, washing dishes, lost in the song that you were singing, thinking yourself alone, as I sat

below on the carpet of the sunken living room, a catbird seat from which to hear glory, the first time I truly understood

the word, as you opened up wide, a part of yourself

I'd never seen, notes swelling and soaring, until tears

streaked my face from the magnitude of such beauty as to overwhelm, the words unknown to me as you sang

in the Latin of the convent, the place you had never wanted to leave, the home that you were forced to forsake

for obligations that had never been yours, but family called the irony not lost on me, even at thirteen, that I wouldn't

have been born had you stayed, into this life of constant survival mode at the mercurial swings of your mood

and the newly discovered word for my difference that you were already trying to scrub out of me with pink

dresses and bows, dunking me repeatedly in the blood of Jesus that did not save me from all the horror that was to come

not knowing for many years, the truth that fueled your pain drove your anger that almost destroyed us both, quietly

tucking the magic of this song, this moment, into my heart inside a tiny bomb shelter of space, that was yet unbroken

— Randi Romo



Artwork: César A. Martínez, *Dando Vida*, 1999

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