

ENCUENTROS Y DESENCUENTROS

by Norma Cantú

para Raúl Salinas

Editor's note: Encuentros, written in tribute to Raúl Salinas, is offered to Voz readers this month in commemoration of Segundo de febrero the date of the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, 160 years ago. It ended the Mexican American war guaranteeing Mexicans, in lands ceded to the U.S., their property rights and cultural/language rights which the U.S. has largely ignored. It also established the Rio Grande as the Southwestern border of Texas.

1.
When we were young,
Revolution lived in our hearts, in our minds,
But most of all in our dreams.
We dreamed of a world of peace and justice
Paz y Libertad. Antes, it was Tierra y Libertad.
We marched, engaged in actions. Lived a life
With meaning. Con sentido. Con conciencia.

The 60s killed and maimed...
Yet we survived. Somehow.
Some died in the fields:
Hay huelga y que viva la causa!
Others died in Nam—
Make Love not War, Make Love not War,
Make Love not War, We chanted
And guns spewed flowers
On graffitied walls
While real guns killed
En Mexico
And at Kent State
Y en Los Angeles,
That fateful day

El Ché, Rubén Salazar,
Quién sabe
Cuantos mas. Erased.
Disappeared.

And I imagine Victor Jara,
Como Lorca, o Giordano Bruno, a beacon
For truth aun desde la tumba, en foza común.
Violeta Parra dando gracias a la vida,
Killing herself.

Moctezuma. Cuauhtémoc. Doña Marina.
Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez.
Leonor Villegas de Magnon
Jovita Idar. Emma Tenayuca. Luisa Moreno.
Adelitas de ayer y de siempre.
Lights extinguished
One way or another.
Voces fuertes como la verdad
Defiant voices silenced, muffled.
Still whispering in our hearts.

And in many towns and villages
Small deaths, not counted...not recorded
By historians. The past a funeral pyre.
The future held ashes.
Forgotten dead souls.

But we survived,
lost faith
In a just world.

2.
The wars kept coming como lluvia
de hydrochloric holy water
Sin cesar.
Destroying it all.
Young men and women
Entombed in flag-draped coffins.

But some live on,
Stay true.
Survived to tell the tale
Of struggle and of resistance
Lived on fighting the good fight.

Marta Cotera. Jose Ángel. Rosie Castro
César y Dolores. Raul. Rubén Solís.
Rafa, la Josie, en San Anto y Laredo,
Osten y en el Valle....the list is way too long

But the telling of the tale is only half the story
We must live it, this new revolution.
Keep adding to the story.
Make it ours in this new century
Wage the new old revolution
Hay que vivir la revolución.
Con el vivir de cada día.



3.
 “Yo soy Chicana
 Tengo color”
 The tears came as I sang words of power
 “Cuando me dicen que hay revolución...”
 But the revolution was always elsewhere
 En Cuba. En Nicaragua. Alla, nunca aqui.
 Except in the pain of everyday life
 Everyday death
 Every day re-evolution, everyday dis-solution.

The revolution came to us like a raging bull
 Too soon harnessed and tamed
 A movement morphed into disparate
 Desperate actions of a few
 But we kept on. Fists high in the air
 Our feet planted on the ground
 Holy ground of our ancestors.

I ask:
 Where have the revolutionaries gone?
 To tend gardens,
 To sip margaritas, o un tequilita?
 Armchair guerrilleros,
 Some became
 Warriors of the pen.
 Others marching lockstep with their ipods
 Battle technological ideologies
 That maim and kill as surely as bullets and bombs.

Aztlán remains in our cellular memory
 Somos la tierra y el cielo—esta tierra y este cielo.
 Chicanindias con corazón encendido.

Revolution happens in the heart and in the mind
 Begins and ends with ideas and ideals.
 Simple and pure.
 We live the revolution.
 Or not. With our revolutionary lives.

4.
 Revolutionary art like revolutionary love
 Takes an artist, a thinker, a lover to bold
 Actions como cohetes de nochevieja
 Announcing a new world.

Once. I listened to Suni Paz, Mercedes Sosa.
 Lucerito. Joan Baez, Violeta Parra, Inez Hernández,
 And Chuy Negrete y Conjunto Aztlán tambien.
 found solace
 in their revolutionary words.



by Linda Lucero

5.
 But being Chicana, that is so 70s!
 The young woman tells me as she sips her
 Starbucks and places the buds in her ears.
 And I wonder,
 Will she listen to the cries of
 slave labor in china?
 The immigrant living in fear?
 To the women dying en Juarez?
 To the young men and women imprisoned
 By a system designed to maim and kill spirits?
 Will she listen to the words of Anzaldúa
 To do work that matters?
 Hermanita,
 Don't matter if we change the world or not
 What matters is that we try
 That we keep trying
 With words and actions
 To change this world
 So that revolutions
 Are truly passé.

6.
 Encuentros y desencuentros en la vida
 Happens all the time
 But when we meet ourselves
 The question remains
 What did you do for the revolution?

Wrote a poem?
 Sang a song?
 Marched for peace?
 Thanked the universe?
 Honored the earth?
 Loved your neighbor?
 Forgave all wrongs?



Or simply lived a revolutionary life?