

北海道 – Hokkaidō: “Camino del mar del Norte”



*“A falta de aura,
al menos diseminemos nuestros efluvios”*
-Henri Michaux

SEMI-CIRCULO ROSADO EN UN FONDO NEGRO

Lo que antes era una flor roja
 volando sin tierra
 vagando sin tregua
lo que antes era una flor floja
 con un centro amarillo
 con un cetro amar y yo
hoy es un regalo
galantería a una dama
adornaba a su ternura
Pero ahora es un semicírculo
rosado puesto en órbita
a un lado del cuadro de óleo astral

TONO AMARILLO

En la parte superior
Kandinsky chilló tanto por ver
 tono amarillo
en la parte superior
 tono amarillo
Él permaneció observando
hasta que sus ojos impresionados vieron
 el vivo armadillo
esos centros
acalorados son tan vivos, y nos sofocan

EL SOL Y LA MEDIA LUNA

Hay un foco fundido
la irradiante naturaleza
 allá arriba
hay una guía luminaria sabor frutal
 allá arriba
es sacar a la luz todas las mentiras

EL CIELO AZUL DEL AIRE TRANSPARENTE

Dame una señal
volver a mirar las sombras
 dejadas en los vestigios
 aire que respiro
 aire que respiro
 ¡aire qué vestigio!
 hace frío
 es el azul
 que frío...

EL MAR EMBRAVECIDO

Voy a bracear en el ultramar con un brazo amarrado a mi espalda,
en el oleaje anochecido
claridad mental en la oscuridad la fría...

TORMENTA

profunda confusión
 de sales bañadas
 en
 lagrimas
 clandestinas en el dolor,
¿pero por qué tendría esto que ser...

SUFICIENTE?

Basta ya de jergas
o me convierto en un *dialecto*

POR LO ALTO VAS

Hembra de sol
hembra solar

hembra meneándose en la cuna de la luna
hembra descansando en la casa celestial
hembra estirpe de la bóvedas centrifugas
hembra todo terreno
hembra descendiente de la tierra
hembra torrente de agua cielo agua mar
hembra que avecina a los astros
por lo alto vas
por lo alto vas
por el alto manto de pinceladas azules vas
desde...

THE BLUEPRINT OF THE BINATIONAL NARCOLAND

There is no river, only sand,
sand, but no river, in the motherland.
There is no river, only sand,
sand and no river, in the borderlands.
There is no river, but only sand,
sand, and no river, in imaginary narcoland.
In my Babylon, there is not really
a river, but only sand and quiver.
There is no river, only illegal drugs,
U.S. guns, and contraband.
There is a dried river, burritos,
delicious margaritas with salt.
There is no river, only sicaros
running cheap errands.
There is no river, only sand,
sand and no river, but only a militarized
land in Forth Bliss, El Paso.
There is no river, but only
maquiladoras, supply and demand,
no river, only women buried in the sand.

MIGHTY GHOST

If I were that orphan who played in cemeteries
along public parks that never existed.
Nobody would have known about me in a poem.
I, a bad seed living amongst the dead
I've learned to wash my grandfather's bloody clothes
akin to money laundering in casinos and bureaus de change.
I, a trafficker on a winged bus
headed for Mexico's northern border
with *narcocorridos* of my drug cartel
headed for the weaponry empire
to run an errand in El Paso, Texas
across an international bridge
a bridge thwart a narrow contaminated canal
a bridge thwart a Bush's hateful electric fence.
I, a smuggler in Tijuana's underground tunnels
a murderer by trade. No one blocks me;
I sell at wholesale or retail;
I know how to control the deadly illegal market
and hide the traces of my steps.
The goat horns: AK-47.
The fallen white feathers, practically spotless;
Guilty innocents.
Gone: a house left behind, and a neighborhood with no schools
Memory: my grandmother
a slave to the toxic manufacturing plant.
And my dream:
To triumph in soap operas.
Guns were my toys
days of yore, portrayed today
that die with spent cartridges
as well as the dead.
Whilst the poets write their poems,
I annihilate the poor
I do them a favor, so *don't fuck with me.*

NAKED DESERT

I am mute—silence night
a rapid persecution
urban bats flying
shattering hearts
walls, windows, ceilings, roofs

blind, dazzled burning skin
a lifetime, a shipwreck
tsunami disguised as a mountain
ship sinking to the ocean's bottom,
calcinating bones
trees, witnesses to killings.

I burn —fade away,
become ashes
drink the torrents
float full of the smoke of tar
dust: land rising as air
breeze: saltwater sea that caresses the sand.

Tombs and monuments to the *Santa Muerte*
on paved streets
crosses are nailed to the roadside.
Street corners are crucified by sidewalks and flowers.
On asphalt, *you will find a reservoir*.
Dirty dresses, blankets and hospital sheets
brag about new mattresses.

NARCO SAINT

Hoy ante tu cruz postrada ¡Oh Malverde mi Señor te pido misericordia y que alivies mi dolor.

The art of camouflage, taught by a chinese man,
Dressed in foliage and banana leaves

The art of hiding your body, in order to be overlooked
in the hills of Sinaloa, or behind a poem

Tú que moras en la Gloria y está muy cerca de dios escucha los sufrimientos de este humilde pecador.

The genesis of the myth is that
there might not be evidence you ever existed; surprisingly,

The art of disguise
A variety of distinctive versions of the ways you'll die

One of them is that you'll be hanged in the Plaza in Culiacán
Your body will remain intact for days

They will bring candles and flowers beneath your picturesque body
While Jesús, María, and Guadalupe turn the other cheek

¡Oh Malverde! mi Señor concédeme este favor y llena mi alma de gozo. Dáme salud Señor, dáme reposo. Dáme bienestar y seré dichoso.

You'll start as a folk saint for the poor, but eventually the narcos
They will adopt you and venerate you for drug-related issues

Beg you for your watchful eyes,
your protection, to hide themselves in plain sight
crossing the desert in Sinaloa, or Guerrero in the south,
or Juárez in the north

The art of camouflage;
You were like a green shadow in the mountains,

You were a hidden fiend going after your victims,
You were the nemesis of the rich. You were the Robin Hood

Creo en San Jesús Malverde mi Ángel Salvador que me ayuda a donde quiera que voy, en mi cartera siempre tiene lugar para hacer a un lado el mal que me pueda encontrar.

REMOLINO

Vértigo de caracol, de anaranjado *fractal*
de rosáceo de la amarillenta babosa con antenas
vértigo de espiral que absorbe a los diluvios
del llanto de la miseria de mi pueblo desolado
de cataclismos
de eclipses

FUSIÓN

Hembra sagaz
hembra exhala los rayos respiración cerebral
“como un relámpago”, digo yo
“Hembra que ilumina a la verdad”, dices tú
cuando detiene meteoritos de plata en su vientre
Diáfano que agoniza en la turbia madrugada
te pareceres a mis quemaduras mortales,
¿en la turbia madrugada diáfano que agoniza
a mis quemaduras mortales te apareces?

BORDER POEM

I

I've crossed xenophobic rivers of *immigrantphobia*,
Gone back and forth to our home, our home,

Right on the street of Magdalena River,
With simple furnishings purchased in *El Paso*

(Sun City) where El Pasoans say the sun shines better,
Not knowing that where it hits is in Juárez

Across the imaginary line separating brothers, "others," and sisters,
Where forty percent of streets are sand, where it's a landscape of *maquiladoras*

(Assembly plants) — a foreign capital to create first-world
Salaries on the third of about fifty bucks a fortnight for a Mexican worker.
For a while,

As a *capturista de datos*, mom worked
Counting coupons for a *maquiladora* at Nielsen.
Aunt Blanca worked there too before mom,
[Quantify the time in a different material sense]

Until, one day, Blanca left

To the United States of America.

She married a Vietnam veteran

Who had nightmares

Of helicopters and bullets and

Blood and innocents.

II

For a while mom worked as a *capturista de datos*.

I counted the time on the fingers of two hands,

Waiting in the small green car with my father at midnight

Outside, outside. Now,

I am waiting for a green card

Inside, inside the parking lot at Nielsen

Where Mom worked. She used to come back home with us.

On our way, whoever beat the count

Of Volkswagens cars won.

On holidays like Mother's Day, she sold in installments

The wristwatches bought in El Paso's Chinatown

And sold them to her peers who had no tourist visas
To cross to the other side.

III

I remember dad going to Los Angeles, Califas to buy clothes
So he could sell them to his friends in installments, which failed.

She stopped working when became pregnant.
I was five when my sister was born. After her birth,

Mom took a chance and opened a grocery store to support us.

Earned more money than the *maquila*.
Mother made small bags of sweets and/ cookies
For me to sell to during recess at Abraham Gonzales Elementary School.
Yet one bitter teacher forbade me to sell my sweets —
At seven years old, I had become the competition of the school's candy store.
It's actually something I'm proud of. I realized now
That the store owners (who were relatives of that teacher)
Were afraid of my abilities to survive, to dream, to be resourceful.
At seven, I bested them at their own game and all they could do was tell me "no."
Sometimes I gave candy to my classmates who had not yet
Succumbed to the tastes of colorful/rubbery *viboritas*,
Gummy ninja turtles, or the marmalade sponges mom bought in El Paso.
I did it when I had recovered value, hoping to get new clients.
Even in the other neighborhood, across from where we lived,
Kids came to buy the famous jellybeans.

IV

Working lapse

Our store sat across from the Luis Pasteur kindergarten
On Río Lena Street where federal employees and teachers lived.
For ten years, my mother opened that store from eight-thirty —
Closed it at three to make lunch for my sister and I,
Reopened at six, and finally closed at ten-thirty.

Precise time

Sundays she did close early
So we could go shopping in El Paso,
To refill the stocks of the mini-store.

Hierarchy of consumption

Sometimes we waited
Over two hours to cross the bridge, at the whim of US immigration officials,
As opposed to the Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Williamsburg bridges,

Where I have never waited for hours to cross the city any day.
 Turn on the radio.
 “My turn, my turn”
Turn off the radio
 Mother with infinite patience
 Listening *norteñas* or Mexican pop music.
 The songs of indie Mexican rock & roll
 of the Mexican white youths, invaded mom’s ears.
 Now I think of her patience, born out of the need for it.

V

In our town, products can be fifty percent more expensive
 Than there, because of Mexico’s import taxes. NAFTA.
 Mom changed the money we earned in Ciudad Juárez to U.S. dollars.
 Mom bought the same products we produce in Juárez.
 (Strawberries Mini Mart),
Mini Súper Las Fresas,
 Because his strawberries were so good —
 In memory of an old man,
 Brown face,
Sombrero,
 Curly grey hair. An old man from Uruapán, Michoacán.
 Two baskets heaped with strawberries he carried.
 He cried out to sell them in the streets:
 “Freeeeeeeesaaaaaas, freeeeeeeesaaaaaas”.
 I can talk about the genesis.

VI

The entire family went to the Molina fruit store
 To buy smoothies of mango (so delicious).
 That’s where the idea to start a business
 Dawned on my mother.
 The idea to launch this business came
 When they went looking for a spot to open
 A fruit and vegetable or smoothies stand in the Chamizal Centre.
 When my parents went to see the gym next door
 To think about what products they might offer,
 They listened to the gossip of the gym employees,
 Who were chatting about the closure of the gym
 The next month. So they did not sign the contract
 And my mother went to light a candle
 To the Virgin of Guadalupe for this important revelation.

We finally found the location on the route to Belen
 And passed by a store that stood alone.
 When they rented, the customers commented
 That the place had bad vibes —
 Those who had rented previously had divorced,
 Had gone broke. And my mother lit another candle
 To the Virgin to make everything right.
 There was no turning back:
 Mother, would have to work hard.

VII

Mom supplied the store with American products from Sam's in El Paso.
 The vegetables Mom got from a produce stand in Juárez, called Guma.

“Thank God no one ever attacked me,”
 “Thank God no one robbed me at the grocery store”, my mother says.

For the simple fact of being a woman
 (In a city where a woman's life is not worth much,
 With over twenty years of abductions
 Of girls and young women, unresolved).
 One day outside of the shop paused a lunatic
 (Who knows what he was asking for).
 He had been kicked out of the grocery store down the street

For being a drifter. Mom said they sent him to her store.
 Mom tried, humoring him, to say they shouldn't mistreat him.

But her hands shook when she offered him
 A bottle of Coca-Cola. The man said,
 “¿Are you afraid?”
 “No, sir. ¿Why should I be afraid?”
 In the middle of the day
 Cecilia had us stock the refrigerator with bottles of soda.
 But one time,
 I broke a glass bottle;
 It shattered about three meters out onto the sidewalk.
 So she stopped putting my sister and I on soda duty.
 Eyes are meant to read.
 Instead, sister and I
 Stocked fruits, vegetables, canned goods, rice,
 Beans, cereal, soap, etc.
 There was a time when the sodas
 Were exploding on their own because

They were kept by the windows
 Where the sun warmed the glass bottles.
 In the heat, they burst open.
Eyes are meant to read.
 My mother used to stack the plastic Coca-Cola cartons
 On top, on bottom of the bottles
 To keep them from rolling away if they exploded.

VIII

Eyes are meant to read.
 Once my sister was in our store.
 My sister who has huge green eyes embedded
 In a white complexion,
 Was spoken to by a stranger who came to buy some things.
 He said he loved bicycles and asked if she did, too.

A week after
 The man returned —
 Appeared on the other side of the street,
 Beckoning my sister
 To come with him for a bike ride.
 But my sister refused. Shook her head *no*.

My mother was restocking the candy.
 She saw what happened from the counter, she came over.

The man explained to my mother
 That he just wanted to give my sister a bike ride.

My mother, instead of getting angry,
 Told the gentleman that my sister was not going with anyone.
 “She doesn’t even go with her father for a bike ride.
 Actually, my husband is in there with my son,”
 She started to say, making the stranger
 Think that she was not alone.
 But she was. She was.
 She was.
 He disappeared quickly.
 I wonder if my sister —
 So beautiful like a fairy tale princess —
 If she would have become one of the many girls
 Who disappear in my beloved Ciudad Juárez?
 Under the indifference and complicity of the authorities.
 But I shouldn’t wonder.

And neither the businessmen
 Nor the politicians care to pay dignified salaries
 To the maquiladora workers, so
 That the ones who operate their factories
 Don't have to live in houses of cardboard
 And cinder blocks—
 Where their homes in
 The peripheries of border towns,
 With unpaved streets.

X

Have no functioning streetlights,
 Where sometimes the Coca-Cola shipments arrive
 Before the trucks that supply drinking water—

Here there are no secondary schools
 For adolescent sons,
 Who grow up instead to be cannon fodder
 For the Sinaloa Cartel or the Juárez Cartel —

There is a rest stop for drugs coming from the south
 To pass over the bridge to the “safest gringo city”
 With only 13.3% of its population white.

What I want to write
 is that I am
 and I can not stop being
 I want to give back everything you have given me, mother.
 And thanks to you I am far away again in New York
 But I'll be fine. Do not worry
 A poem for you, mother
 is the least I can do
 turning my love into words.

Here's a bit of me and you
 It rained in your day today
 for you mother. I am ashamed
 I can not give you more.

I would catch a milky moon
 consuming the mantle of the blind
 that maternal moon.

How is it that I can not love
as does a mother with her breasts?
Despite the distance, although I was
dizzy in the Caribbean. Love
that nobody pronounces, love,
nor can be written twice
Three is too much although you know what I mean
I'm already far away again from R-o-m-a.

I wonder the origin
of good and evil
I wonder the origin of my residence on earth
and all of you, all of them
The wonderful story of my father when he met you
and you made love and I was born
You slept atop the sheets in 1981 by the Lopez Mateos
or the tenth of May, for I was born
9 months later in February 1982.

To Live. Mother
life in which there is an end
life in which we must try.
The pink house in which you were born
then, Arroyo de Encinos, your paradise
Those hands that fed mouths
those hands that washed away years
those hands that caressed
those hands that smiled at dreams
and they worked hard
in the mini supermarket named "Strawberries"
near Fovissste Chamizal.

Here is the firstborn of all
he inherited all your evils
but nothing bad happened.
I have improved a lot
Here is the barefoot corridor. Your dreamer:
What I miss of Ciudad Juarez, is
you, my dear mother.

THE FABLE

No one could stop the construction of bridges:
I managed to cross them every day
Behind, the shadow stayed forever.

Giant birds directed by remote control
They pointed to the zenith of my crown of thorns.
Dragonflies flying over the border. That sky was infinite
if she pranced toward him.

She saw a drowned man. When they tried to cross the river, someone in uniform
Had pierced a lotus flower

They were ruby,
the clots becoming copper by sunset
as if it were my breath that he wanted

Beauty should be invisible and invincible.

Bubbles pulled from his mouth with visible sounds cloistered
and he gargled. I could see the vapor rising off of your skin

It's thanks to my mother I know how to swim. When I
the firstborn asphyxiated in a vacuum, I floated
like a tree trunk in a river, about to disappear
in the distance
and space out there
my heart still throbbed inside a box of oxygen.

The distance between the liquid planet and me, just a needle passed without
hurting,
like mending the wounds of my childhood.

Now strange octaves, arpeggios, oscillations and volume.

I promise to mark one of the canvases with tomatoes, strawberries, grapes,
cherries, watermelon, grapefruit, raspberries, beef, bell peppers but not with the
Big Apple because it's not red inside.

THE GAP

I need a vivid imagination in dealing with this *table of discontent*; served as everyday breakfast, as everyday brunch, as everyday dinner on the everyday tablecloth of heartaches and headaches. I have to picture myself in the everyday gap

of inequality, for instance, on a resounding moment, climbing the Franklin Mountain in El Paso, Texas, imagining my feet up to the ancient deserted peak —
;Wait a minute! I don't know why this sounds strange: I feel like that

wonderful mountain should not be called with a human name, —;Mountains should not have a name nor be named. I just do not like it. It ruins the point of the poem. That's right. My purpose is to try to write this poem without naming

geographical places, although I want to make clear that I was born and raised on the Mexican contradictory border. A location I am proud of. For a long time, I thought that the mountain was named after the father founder Benjamin Franklin. I always

found this super strange and intriguing when looking at the mountain from anywhere I was standing. Sometimes I was riding my bicycle and I saw the mountain. Sometimes I was in my car waiting for two hours in the U.S. Port of Entry and I saw the

mountain. Even the similarities with the name of the mountain, at the end, is not the same person. So now, I am trying to imagine myself standing on the top of the mountain. I started explaining about the mountain as an epic interpretation of the making of the border. Imagining myself on the mountain before 9/11 era,

before the age of militarized borders, before the Spanish colonizers arriving with their crosses and swords. Imagining myself clad with feathers of birds, glowing reptiles, mule deer hunters, squirrels, coyotes crossing the border, mountain lions killed by missing bullets. I sang the harmonics:

I felt free like golden eagles, ash throated fry, hummingbirds. I smell the *lechugilla*, the stool, the ocotillos, the yucas cactus. I smell the *gobernadora*. There is only one river in the valley, with clear water. I breathe the fresh air. I touch the clouds.