

# Chocha's House

William E. Archilla

By the blood-stained slaughter house  
through dust deep in the stone dirt roads  
among pale yellow grass and clay flower pots,

stands a watermelon red and olive green  
house, where I painted maps, oceans and roads  
left unfinished, like the faces and birds created out

of white pillow clouds in the pure sky,  
where a dirt slope of earth became a mountain  
a puddle beneath a green bush a lake,

where I, a dirty child,  
starring down at the fish bottom of the fountain  
playing Indians and cowboys in the lake

yelling for the western cowboys -  
not knowing the black hair Indian meant me,  
locked up the line of red ants in match boxes

like the prisoners of toy soldiers  
But the ants always found a way to  
flee crawling over soldiers, biting and tearing plastic faces.

Unexpectedly the big-headed ants bit me:  
How dare they bite their God who can tall  
crush them with a Godzilla stomp through town?

During gentle breeze of the rains,  
I stepped outside to watch drops of heaven fall  
digging worms in the damp and dark earth ground

watching snail-trails  
molding pyramids out of crumbled-mold  
bricks, but soon called to be kept inside

by the water voice of Chocha.

I followed her voice in the distance and hold  
and point my finger on her lips - pale light.

Chocha's house, where I chased birds  
and flies with Didvi under the strong sun of June,  
watching Carolina sunbathing and singing

running down the patio stairs,  
became small and silent in the rooms  
with closed walls and doors in the pale blue evening.

From the kitchen door, a faint light  
mounted on the dusty red brick patterned floor  
where Chocha stood bent over a stove filled

with black burned pots and pans:  
a dull light bulb hung above the greasy kitchen floor,  
the warm smell of boiling beans filled

the air: warm in soft shadows  
in the smell of a burning match  
in the toasted crisp of frying eggs

listening to Cumbias del cafe, quietly  
listening to stories of Papa Rolando and his match  
with the bottle and his Quetzal Mother who crushed his eggs

and clung to him like fish to water  
until his great classical mass-death  
with crashing cymbals and high pitch strings

low heavy drum piano,  
leaving a funeral silence in the blood and birth  
of Chocha, visiting the Old Campo Santo every spring.

She prayed kneeled  
in a faint yellow glare of candles  
by the side of my bed and an altar of flowers.

The stars hung like flash bulbs over  
Papa Rolando's black and white photograph in candle  
night. I slept with a dream of a stone river:

El Cipitio giggling - crouched  
and perched on a wild tree branch by  
the side of the crooked stone river line

with his huge straw hat  
over his dark eyes and naked body line  
sticking his belly over his sex in the thin moonlight.

I used to be that little  
until camouflaged soldiers arrived  
with U. S. helicopters and advisers in the full-red night.