

Somewhere In Lincoln Heights

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Through dark banners of night
through L.A. old city streets
slowly sinking beneath soft September lights

slowly drifting from complete
daylight dreams of the silver screen-
I drag - lost in a cloud of cigarette smoke and sleep

myself down the cemetery Broadway scene
thinking-screaming-wondering of going back home,
leaving behind nothing but street light-pavement dreams

for the ancient city of night: alone
since cathedrals broke and burned Cuzcatlan
-still chained- running through volcanoes and mountains called home

where Death Squads bite and howl like Ku Klux Klan
where men and women disappear in the dead highway night
and those who leave forget their homeland.

But everybody returns on dead grandfather night
missing L.A. bars and icy city streets
lost in the machinery money-making western night.

I walk passed the Mexican Restaurant heat,
the Nicaraguan chef who left Somoza in the seventies,
sun-burnt faces in the evening city streets,

jump-rope girls memories
Chinatown traffic and stale beer,
-late night Latino remedies:

a skeleton city, mountains, bells-late last year
my sisters, old in their voices, who wanted me home
my father to ashes who wanted me far from his fears.

I creaked up the stairs alone
thinking enough of these flowers and candy
enough sugar in my bones

enough oil in my blood and fingers - economy
 - besides limited boredom
 leads to Spanish speakers only

But you should see the apartment I call home:
 a radio bed playing Sur y Cielo de Tambores to rugs,
 a small black and white tv, always on,

table and chairs, a couple of Mexican mugs
 a few stacks of books in the corner floor:
 Sor Juana, Dalton, Paz to smug,

The Autumn of the Patriarch by the door
 But should I feel guilty when I read Beckett or Mary Shelley?
 Should I throw Ginsberg out the window door?

What of the Jazz detective chase down the black alley?
 What of Irish clouds rolling thick on rainy city street?
 What of the railroad-Chinatown cantos through the belly?

Forgive me, for I have sinned in heat
 my thoughts, conceived and untamed, boxed in a book, alone
 they fly through avenues
 up roof tops, down L.A. streets

writing letters to Central America- once home
 sick of L.A. and the broken-bullet sky
 creating in the street light rain and blue moon- now home.

Next door, Ranchera or Cumbia music thumps, grinds and dies.
 I sink and sleep on the mattress with dreams of India
 waiting on a bleak rainy morning sky.