

Criminantes
(In the Cloud City)

Tania Romero

He heard the boy yell for his mamá,
A lonely carita pálida,
Among the masses of Tent City children.

The boy held up a Crayola drawing:
A half-split nopal in the middle of a desert,
A half-buried bullet in the fractured soil.

He cradled the boy in his arms,
“No llores m’hijo,
Dream of Cloud Cities instead,
Those borderless airlands,
Where you have the birthright to belong,
Where clouds roam free in the sky,
In the shape of transient turtles escaping from stray cats.”

The boy listened intently,
“I was once scared of turbulent clouds too,
The ones that cast dark shadows over canyons,
The ones that echo ‘Deportees’ into the careless winds of history,
The ones that hinder the smoke from our nameless ashes to rise into the sun.”

The boy interrupted,
“Do you need a passport to breathe in the sky?”

The man held the boy tighter,
“Dream of Cloud Cities m’hijo,
A place made of open ports,
With traveling air-ports,
No need for useless passports with names.
In the Cloud City, everyone breathes home,
Lawlessly, Namelessly, Fearlessly, Shamelessly,
And are labeled Criminantes,
No More.”