

Scattered /Re-partidos

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Venturing

Abuela Blanca,
white as the snow
shining on silvered streets
her grandchildren long to see.
White as an image
of shimmering sparks
on northern lands.

She inhabits a space of reverie
where angels with each flight
sprinkle abundant light.

Three attempts eluding borders and planes
as an eagle she keeps watch
her unyielding spirit soars, twists and turns
mirage becomes a route to explore.

In Los Angeles she sets out to prove
the sun shines as a brilliant coin
for toiling women to seize.

Amid rays of light
her wings open to clean
her wings fold to cradle
her wings wither from work
her wings in need of recovery.

Our mama Blanca scouts new horizons
for daughters to explore
and nietos to make their own.

Parted

I.

The pickup meanders through a narrow road
lined by henequen plants.
Complete desolation fills the air...
Only a bird flying here and there
in that heavy afternoon hour
that weighs down every breath.

We sit in the flat bed behind,
sobbing as we approach
the bifurcated road
one way leading to San Miguel
and the other to Morazán.

Mother chats with abuelo in the front
We smell her faint papaya shampooed hair
flying wild through the open window.
Her facial features subtly erased
through the glass that borders
our breath and her gaze.

The pick-up comes to a full stop
releasing some muffled snorts
confounded with bursting sobs.
No one dares descend
No one dares bid farewell.

Mother then opens the door
Abuelo with a feigned smile
extends a steady hand
to help us get down.

She snuggles three-month old in my arms
and gently kisses her goodbye.
Then breaks the hollering silence,
just enough to express her love:
“Cuídense mucho, hijas de mi corazón”
she manages to say
as tears flood her cheeks
and our sobs turn to laments.

Her purse swings back

dangling like her ripped heart
as she takes the first steps
on that wretched road North
so many women before her,
weeping women,
Siguanabas of our creeks,
had watered with their tears.

II.

Weeks go by
and no news
to be had...

Was she caught? Is she waiting in dark hole?
Is she trapped under a desert sky
at the mercy of hawks?

Would the messenger show up to tell us someone placed a call?
Would abuelo rush into town to receive it?

Trucks come and go through those desolate roads
with miners, bosses and unprocessed gold.

In the dust left behind
free range cows roam.

In the distance
we see precious cargo get away.

Run towards those trucks,
catch a glimpse of golden face.
Maybe he will take us to town
Perhaps a letter awaits...

Trucks come and
go again,
and again,
but no news
find their way...

We settle into a routine
of waiting, dreaming and hoping,
dreaming, hoping, and waiting...

A month and two go by
until first letter arrives.
Engraved in what seemed like gold
is the magic verb PASÉ,
“I made it across.”

And just like that
she traverses the threshold
unto a new path
to uncover her own mine.

On the move

Budding adolescents
in the hills of Morazán
where winds of war howl
where rivers will turn red.

Many leguas between us
and mother’s love.

Cloaked in resolve she returns
to retrace her path,
to shield her children,
to guard their soul
new promises to chart.

Trekking by her side,
the borders we traverse
know our scent of hope
know of our distress.

At the fringes of the unknown
faith and fear confounded,
emotions crisscross
as we forge ahead.

Family split apart
Some hide in clandestine homes,
sunken in darkness.
Hearts galloping,
throbbing thoughts,
suffocated sighs

await a sign.

Others crammed
in compartments of trucks
suspending the senses,
squeezing the void,
swallowing every breath,
imprisoning every doubt.

We reunite as shadows
to assert existence
to form a mass.

A glittering sun
exploding in colors
marks a new dawn.

Unsettled

Angelitos eager to spread wings
huddle as one,
sharing our own warmth,
yearning the same love.

Indulging in mother's arms
is a luxury we can't afford.
She attends to a ballerina
who swirls and turns,
lost in times bygone.

Walls encroach on our fancy
to roam city streets by her hand.
A sole window displays despair,
the indigent rummages through waste
grandmother laments we have nothing to share.

At week's end
we revel in mother's embrace
wings flutter,
eyes rejoice,
hearts half-filled
will long for more.

Taking flight

New light beams
in those gloomy walls
nine of us share
trapped amid
Los Angeles smog.

She comes to meet
the herd of newcomers
mother led to safe port.

Her thunderous English sounds
shake hollow nooks.
Her boundless presence
floats in the air,
a mysterious countenance
unforeseen in our world.
Does she hail from shores
where African queens rule?

We admire the bright makeup tones
that add radiance to eyes
and boldness to lips.
A floral dress for Sunday church,
An elegant wrap around the neck,
Thick heels bear the stout body
that dignified she holds.

Delving into our eyes
she discovers the fleeting sparkle
her big mama love could restore,
calming troubled hearts,
scattering seeds of joy.

Her arms extend like tentacles
long as Los Angeles streets
our gaze could not contain.
Her manicured nails
with twinkling stars
lure us to her chest.
An open heart awaits,
a gift to children
that were not her own.

Her home readies to embrace
Angelitos, flapping their wings.

Life sprouts in bursts
dreams blossom again,
mothers of all sorts
will fill the void.