

# APPENDIX III

## REMEMBERING RICARDO SÁNCHEZ

# RICARDO SÁNCHEZ

## LIBERATIONIST AND HUMANIST POET\*

ARNOLDO CARLOS VENTO, PH.D.

### RICARDO SÁNCHEZ: THE MAN, HIS PHILOSOPHY AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Presented at the *Ricardo Sánchez Celebration*, El Paso, 1996.

My first encounter with Ricardo Sánchez occurred during a cold winter morning of Jan. 5, 1977 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As Director of Chicano Studies at the University of Wisconsin I had extended an invitation to Ricardo as a visiting Professor. It was, in fact, during breakfast that January morning, that the concept of *Canto al Pueblo* was born in these first discussions, and planning between Ricardo and myself. It marked not only the beginning of a series of *Cantos* comprised of Chicano/Latinos and Native Americans that were to take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Corpus Christi, Texas, St. Paul, Minnesota and Tempe, Arizona, but also a friendship and collaborative literary association that was to last until his untimely death, 18 years later.

To be sure, there will be many characterizations of one of the more controversial figures in Chicano history. It was not so much that he was not understood; rather it was that his incisive criticism was too much to bear for those who were too comfortable within the system. The language, often inflammatory, was threatening to the Spanish-speaking middle class. Academicians and Chicano leaders were often his targets and in retaliation, they would blacklist him with respect to performance-related activities as well as potential employment in Chicano Studies.

I remember Ricardo as I remember several other activists from the 30's and 40's that rose to the occasion in defense of our cultural, linguistic and civil rights. One common thread among them and Ricardo Sánchez was (A) a total commitment to the cause, (B) an unyielding uncompromising stand with regard to principles and (C) the willingness to risk reputation and security. Another characteristic of the great defenders of *La Raza* was their communication skills in the art of oratory. Ricardo Sánchez was always ready to seize the moment to project his ideas of liberation and cultural integrity.

Ricardo Sánchez has been characterized as creative, as dynamic, as a sharing individual, dogmatic, a maverick, a barrio rebel, a threat, a *bato loco*, a universal man and a Chicano Walt Whitman. In one interview in the late 70's, he characterized himself, not as a bilingual or bicultural person but rather one with a tertiary approach to life and writing, a triune pyramidal person that had created the third form of his person i.e. the mestizo.

Through the years, in *Cantos*, Ice Houses, and reunions at his bookstore in San Antonio, I was able to see the multi-faceted nature of his personality beyond the socio-political criticism levied at dominant white society, there was the person who was scarred from the violence of the past: the pinta, the beatings, the poverty, the snobbery, years of suffering indignities; this was the Ricardo that lashed out ferociously throughout his Work. But there was another facet to his personality and that was one that was rarely seen: the compassionate, caring, loving and sensitive person. I used to jokingly refer to him as the Burly Bear but underneath that aggressive stance was a gentle, kind, loving person. On several occasions, Ricardo revealed to me not the burly bear but the soft and gentle kitten. There are other facets to his personality his *cábula*, his pícaro humor, his love and respect for the *mujer*. And then there is the Ricardo Sánchez, the dreamer, the poet with a vision. He was a prolific writer of unquestionable energy; what Ricardo was not was one dimensional. He was an intelligent and highly complex person who in his last years projected a highly mature and universal vision of humanity. He often told me, as if he were perhaps wanting

to see my reaction, that he was the greatest Chicano poet and that history would record it after he was long gone. My response was simply that time was the best judge on these matters, to which he, like the lawyer pleading his case, proceeded to demonstrate how his themes concerns and ideas were no where to be found in other Chicano poets. To that I agreed. It was not so much that Ricardo was giving himself *madera* or self praise as much as knowing his own reality so well that he was conscious of his role and his contributions to literature historically speaking. There were times, that he, and laughing at himself, would kiss his ring filled hands. To this, one can say that he had not only a good sense of humor but a good image of himself. In terms of his contributions, his voluminous body of poetry and service to the Chicano literary and political movement will certainly be his legacy.

Even after the conservative politicians in Washington pulled the rug on Chicano Studies programs in the 80's, Ricardo Sánchez kept the fire of the *movimiento* going during these difficult times. In so doing, he influenced many young aspiring poets shaping and determining Chicano reality. He constantly advised young people to stay out of gangs and learn to read and stay in school. He was a poet with a hunger for dignity and justice that he found lacking in society. Within his philosophy stood out *carimalismo* and ethnic solidarity as processes predicated on integrity and truth, on open dialogue with others. Most often, the challenge of dialogue to his detractors went unanswered and was often reduced to deceit behind his back. He valued most those editors and poets/writers who openly spoke out. His early poetry of *Los Cuatro* was criticized by academicians to which Sánchez retorted: "It was created in the heat of the moment to serve organizing needs in barrios and migrant camps, to light fires and stroke our spirits." Too many saw him glorifying the *cholo* existence but a recent interview indicates a different concern: "My concern was to insure that my children would not glorify a world Born to Lose/Born to Suffer *cholismos* which only land in the *pinta*...[with] such an attitude, one does not ponder to *La Vida Loca* nor longs to see the next generation of *raza* lost in the *mierda*, defining me as someone outside the pale of fads." Ricardo Sánchez did not outwardly choose to be a poet as much as poetry became the fuel for his existence.

*Canto y Grito mi liberación* established him as a major artistic voice in the Chicano movement. For Sánchez the *Canto* metaphorically was the song of the breaking of dawn, the gentle song of flowers opening up to the *Padre Sol*: it was the *canto* of life. His *Grito* was the outcry, the affirmation that one is born to be free, to be oneself in terms of how one is. Together it is the festival of *Chicanismo* and at once liberationist. Ricardo Sánchez did not care to change his cultural reality for anyone. What motivated him was a lifetime/struggle pain and confrontation. He knew who he was and thus, he respected himself. He said, "The first obligation is to respect oneself, to arrive at a personal truth [that] one wants to share with one's progeny..." He felt that his worth was determined by himself and not by outsiders. Chicano, then becomes "A definition of action, of realization within all that I am, not some fragmented term of genocide handed me by a system only concerned with digitizing me, amortizing my humanity by numbing me within a stereotyping/statistics driven process of dehumanization." While *Canto y Grito mi liberación* was the outcry and manifesto of liberation, *Hechizospells* was the philosophical explanation. It is the response to the human condition that is central to all of Ricardo Sanchez's poetry. When he achieves this he releases the slave within and leads him toward his realization as a worthy caring being willing to confront destructive elements i.e. elements that are anti-humanistic. He asserts his right to become himself and the responsibility to do it humanely. His poetry thus was part of the body of liberationist literature, which has integrated within it a moral imperative to education. It is through the liberationist literature that we question so that "we may reflect on our humanity and make determinations that are life giving." The poet wants to create a grander sense of our humanity, hoping that in the future we can reflect and state that "we acted ethically, caringly and humanely." Those poets, writers and academicians that work outside the resistance movement are but "commodities that white Amerika can trot out as the new tokens...to have deliver the dulcet tones which do not truly offend those whose largesse and power have historically offended humanity..." to those critics who arrogantly postulated that *Aztlán* was in exercise in Romanticism, he responds: "Aztlán is more than a mythical notion, more than a moth dream in some cowering poet's trip; it is a land that was stripped from our ancestors, it is our tierra in all senses of the word

and our mestizo-Indigena corazones yearn to recapture a heritage patrimony and destiny brutally taken from us..."

The outcry of Ricardo Sánchez is the anger that still is locked within, "it is the fomentation of outrage in an outcry to liberation" to many, this can be offensive, particularly those who are comfortable or those who want to be allowed to survive; it is unsettling to those from Latin America that come here to be citizens, and to "Mexicans who crave acceptability like some of their ancestors did when they embraced Maximiliano and became mariachis for the *franceses* who were colonizing them."

Ricardo Sánchez while crying out with dissatisfaction with society is a poet that is enamored with life itself. Life is a celebration; he breathes and lives each moment to the fullest. His eyes capture the details one normally takes for granted. This celebration is mirrored further by *Canto al Pueblo* where artists and writers celebrate and build new bridges, for art belongs to the people and through it "we can know our feelings and our real past." Art and literature are mirrors of our mindsouls. As *mestizos* by history, we can live in multiple worlds as *gente íntegra* that we can be." He sees mediocrity throughout society; a humanity that has had plastic surgery, an America that does not change, mass-producing the same shapes and types of human beings.

But Ricardo sees beyond national borders for he realizes that the destiny of *La Raza* is tied to the destinies of all the people of the earth "...that our struggle is but another face of universal quest for freedom-that male/female relations must become egalitarian...that we must learn to see beyond the confines and barriers of our barrios, states [and] country to a world that is multi-hued and polylinguistic." He calls for taking all the meaning of our existentiality to the world, without losing our identity so that we can broaden our experiences enriching our commitment to liberation, and the total transformation of human society.

The last phase of Ricardo Sánchez is characterized by a mature historically reflective and philosophical voice as evidenced by *Border Bones: Sketches from the Pass*. Sanchez's new voice is not so much a *grito* as it is a new voice which is incisive and flowing projecting a mature confident professional synthesis that is both historically and socially based; it is a macroscopic view of *La Raza* from pre-Columbian times to the present. It is analytical, honest and engaged. Thus Ricardo Sánchez saw through the process of humanization, the bridging of peoples in a true *carnalismo* or brotherhood. Towards the twilight of his year, he remained positive amidst a world trapped in violence and decadence: "Maybe I no longer have a people or home or *Causa* to look toward because I simply yearn to arrive at freedom and not a limited notion of humanity." To Ricardo Sánchez, the universe was his world if only there was more time for each of us "There is so little life time for each of us, maybe 70 or so years or even a hundred, and I want to pack the universe into my being, perhaps to give a grander sense of being, to my limited self."

The poet in serious reflection humbled himself as he thought of the moments or years left to him: "And I mean to make what moments or years remain for me to live, count, conquering my fears and sharing *lo poquito que sé*, for the world is big, beautiful, loving, hurting and in a turbulent process of change--*quiero ser un granito de arena en la playa humana*." In his last years each day became a struggle, an encounter with survival; here the poet reflects on one's modification in health as well as literature: "I stumble each day trying to make sense and somehow surviving until the next moment, never truly knowing if I shall survive one bout with diabetes to another encounter with diverticulitis. My large intestine is decreased by 18 inches, yet I survive and I wonder about how we modify ourselves as I cut out nouns, adjectives, adverbs and even verbs from my poems and articles."

Where will Chicano poetics be placed in the future? What is the destiny of our efforts? Ricardo Sánchez in his ironic wit reflects on its disinterment in some distant future: "Will the future disinter our bones and sing praises to *Chicanosaurian* poetics in some distant mausoleum of diversity? Whatever our destiny it will be something that we will have created through the pain of daring to be ourselves at whatever cost."

In the end, Ricardo Sánchez will have a secure place in Chicano history as a forerunner of the late XX century Chicano protest poetry. He will be remembered for many things but his most salient characteristic will be his uncompromising position to be truthful to be oneself, to have integrity so that *we* also can be whole, integrated and humanized beings.

## UN AÑO DESPUÉS - REMEMBERING RICARDO\*

Phil Durán

Washington State University

Great poets and human beings like Dr. Ricardo Sánchez do not abandon those for whom they struggled when they cross the final border without us. Their voices will continue to speak as long as we, the communities of memory, honor and celebrate their legacies.

Ricardo has been gone a year now, and I still remember him as a warrior who never abandoned the turf of battle, whether confronting the cancer that invaded his body or struggling for someone else's justice. This poet, activist, professor and lover of people was one of the greatest minds and voices the world has known, though many did not recognize it. He did not always need pen and paper to write poetry; he could create it on stage before a live audience.

Several tributes and accounts about his life have already been written, but his record would still be incomplete without some of the ironies and special moments I was able to capture from the last five years of his active life. It was during this period that he lived in the Pacific Northwest and I came to know him as a *carnal*, a *compadre*, and a fellow poet. He had no bachelor's degree, having gone directly from a G.E.D. certificate to a Ph.D. degree, finally earning the rank of full tenured professor at Washington State University. Since he converted every negative aspect of his earlier life as a *pinto* and a school dropout into a success story, he deserves recognition.

No one expected Ricardo's creativity and celebration of life to end so soon. But everything changed on January 23, 1995. It seemed like a normal Monday morning until María Teresa called me at my campus office.

"*Cómo está mi compadre?*" I asked, expecting the usual cheerful answer.

"*Pues, no muy bien,*" she answered, and the crisis behind a strong woman's voice

became immediately obvious. Ricardo had spent the night in the hospital. A bleeding ulcer was soon ruled out and cancer became a possibility. The other transforming events of that week happened fast. On Wednesday, the results of the biopsy came back from the lab: *adenocarcinoma*, diagnosed as terminal. Surgery was scheduled for Thursday and Ricardo asked to be awakened by the sounds of recorded Chicano music. The surgeon reported that the stomach cancer had already spread to vital organs and could not be removed.

On Friday morning, a strange feeling came over me, as if Ricardo's cancer were invading my own body. Maybe I was experiencing an aspect of *carnalismo* too mysterious to fully understand: identifying with another human being like myself. There is, after all, the Mayan concept of *In Lak' Ech Yelir*: "I am another yourself. I am you. We are the same."

After that first sign of cancer arrived unexpectedly and with a vengeance, Ricardo was no longer able to meet his classes. My mind then wandered back four years to a different reality when the Sánchez family joined Norma and me

around our dinner table for a menudo supper, the first time in two decades that another Chicano family had been in our home and able to satisfy our *cultura* hunger. They ate comidas con chile picoso

Presented at the Dr. Ricardo Sánchez Celebration, September 7, 1996 in El Paso, Texas. prepared our way and Ricardo, like me, was addicted to jalapeños, which he often carried in his pocket. He knew the language of my youth. He was a down-to-earth vato with a brilliant mind and a Ph.D. who never considered himself higher than other *Raza*. He was an experienced intellectual with first-hand knowledge of *El Movimiento*, not just a book-learned academician. He spoke of El Paso as a unique place which he insisted "is not Texas." I think I understood him, because to me, Ysleta is a unique place where my ancestors on both sides of the family were born and buried since at least the 18th century. Ysleta was here first; Ysleta is not El Paso.

So that first evening our two families came together was meant to happen. It was a time of solemn beginnings and carnalismo bonding.

It was almost a ritual  
as we blessed the first bowl in front of us  
ceremoniously adding  
*chile piquín* and diced onion  
to the purifying mixture  
of red hot *chile colorado* from Nuevo México,  
draining our sinuses and cooling our tongues  
with forced air that filled the room  
with lispy sounds and wonderfully painful sensations,  
spiced with Ricardo's utterances about places en *El Chuco*  
which I still remembered from 21 years before,  
prompting my memory of Ysleta-childhood days  
when I played dangerous games with my cousins  
using homemade technology...  
Oh, I wanted to return.

Ricardo told me he had come to WSU hoping for a more stable life style and reduced activism for his family's sake. Even so, it took him only one year to bring back the word "Chicano" to our campus. Chicano power had fallen victim to national attempts to dissolve Chicanos into a hispanic soup made mild the "American" way. Also that year, WSU Chicano students began to celebrate El Segundo de Febrero instead of letting it pass as Ground Hog Day. And Teresa's presence was no less important. She donated her time and skills to form the folkloric dance group *Sabor de la Raza*, which today is still going strong.

In the summer of 1992, Ricardo led our university in hosting the first Border Crossings Conference, which attracted enthusiastic Chicano artists and scholars to our isolated town. Most of them paid their own expenses because they chose to participate with Ricardo. Author Franca Bacchiega, who had been looking for such an opportunity, also came from Italy with her husband, paying their expenses. During an evening session in Bryan Auditorium, she read selected Chicano poems while the Chicano authors, including Lalo Delgado and Ricardo Sánchez, sat in the audience listening to their poems being read in Italian. This was a significant moment in the history of our University but, unfortunately, the attendance lacked institutional representation.

The following year's Border Crossings Conference was not the same, as politics kept Ricardo from exerting much leadership. Gone were the unity and spirit of celebration of the previous year. I became aware of behind-the-scenes *movidas* when Ricardo asked me to moderate the Noche de Cultura in his place so as not to appear he was exerting too much control. I assumed, like the previous year but this time erroneously, that my contribution qualified me for a complimentary registration to the Conference sessions. The organizers were so unlike Ricardo, so unlike Raza with *corazón*. I was not allowed into the room to hear the keynote speaker (whose book Ricardo required in his poetics class) unless I paid a fee, in stark contrast from the previous year when Ricardo honored every program personality and contributor with an individual poem mounted on a frame and presented with a public expression of gratitude at the end of the Conference. (Ricardo wrote 16 poems in a single one-hour sitting while we were at McDonald's.)

Ricardo called himself a *catedrático*, proud of his achievements and world renown, but he never stopped identifying with oppressed peoples in America or the world, including the *Zapatistas* for whom we sponsored special poetry readings. He traveled extensively to the Spanish-speaking communities in Washington State, representing the University, reading poetry, speaking to youth groups, making contacts with farm workers and planning with educators.

He lived and died a rainbow warrior, fighting not only for *el pueblo* but for everyone's justice and using his undeniable success to inspire others, young and old. Unfortunately, there were those who did not like him for the wrong reasons. They may not have known him and his passion well enough, or perhaps his candor and honesty were too uncomfortable. Ricardo was Ricardo, likable or not, and he did not let anyone to define him or keep him from stating what he had to say so eloquently. Long before his illness, he asked me twice: "Do you think I've done enough? Do you think I will leave an adequate legacy when I die?" To him, being a Chicano implied universal empathy. He was the enemy of whatever limits and excludes. He was proud of his *Tewa* indigenous heritage, which he traced to San Juan Pueblo and was perhaps a source of his spirituality that considers all humans as relatives and responsible for each other's welfare.

A liberated individual until the end, Ricardo died from cancer but was not defeated by it. His terminal condition was just another challenge, and he continued to make big plans, such as a writing institute at Washington State University or a school for children in his future home in El Paso. Celebrating life to the end, he refused to lie down and wait to die. He said he would leave when he was ready, and that day arrived on September 3. One evening, as we spoke on the phone when he was in obvious pain, he said "*Qué buena es la vida, verdad?*"

Ricardo Sánchez never missed an opportunity to express irony with invented language. By coincidence, he was at home watching *El Profe*, a Cantinflas video I had loaned him about an activist teacher in México, when he received a phone call from the WSU Provost informing him that he had been promoted to full-tenured professor. Ricardo humorously began to call himself "*El Profe Cabal*," the full (literally "complete") professor who now, ironically, was no longer able to meet his classes and live out his tenured professorship. In the new section of *Canto y Grito Mi Liberación* (re-published in 1995 by WSU Press), which contains some of his most passionate poetry, one finds the optimistic phrase "yes, I can-cer-vive" which, when read in Spanish, gives the opposite meaning "cancer lives."

During one of several Saturdays I spent with him when Teresa needed to go out of town, Ricardo opened his mail and received his first pay check after acquiring permanent disability status. He stared at it, despondent but not surprised, and insisted that I see it. The check was worth half the usual monthly amount. I stood there with a lump in my throat, groping for healing words but could think of nothing to dispel the reality of the moment. Before me was a great human being who had experienced pain most of his life and had finally found some stability and security for his family - until now. In one of his poems written during this time, he states: "...otra vez una vida de pocos recursos y muchas hambres culturales/sociales..." The obvious injustice crept deeply into my bones. While I was enjoying health and a full pay check, next to me was a carnal, perhaps more deserving than I, in great pain. I felt powerless, even guilty, in those moments. Had I given him everything I had, it would not have cured his illness.

Ricardo measured his success in terms of his benefactors, those he hoped to empower with words and deeds. Even as he lay in the hospital after learning of his terminal condition, he wrote poetic blessings to students who came to visit him. He spoke for the unfortunate whom society had cast aside and who needed a voice. It was for them, and especially for *el pueblo*, that he constantly struggled since leaving the prison cell. While he aspired to his own concept of greatness and eventually defied the hopeless predictions and shallow expectations of a sick society, his message to younger generations was that they were not born to limit themselves but to become great. In Ricardo's every breath were the words, "*Sí se puede!*" "*Sí se puede!*"

That Ricardo was an internationally recognized human rights activist can be ascertained by a letter he received in February of 1993 from an International Emergency Committee, which included a long-standing British member of Parliament, urging him to participate in a dangerous mission to Peru. The letter reads: "As an internationally recognized poet, known for defending the human rights of people throughout the U.S., Central America and Latin America, your participation is imperative. Your knowledge of the culture, your mastery of the language, and your personal courage and stand would be essential to the impact this delegation can have. We implore you to move heaven and earth to participate in this historic delegation." I was very disturbed at first about Ricardo's involvement in such a mission which seemed to protect someone who is massacring indigenous people: *El Sendero Luminoso* and political prisoner Abimael Guzmán, whose life was being threatened by President Alberto Fujimori. But Ricardo explained that, if Fujimori carried out his threat, he would set a dangerous precedent for human rights activists.

Ricardo escaped the negativism and despair of the *barrio* and faced opposition to greatness since early childhood. A story he often told in keynote addresses to youth was about his second grade teacher at Zavala Elementary School in El Paso who asked the class what they wanted to do when they grew up.

Ricardo had the audacity to say he wanted to become a writer and a poet, to which she responded, "Ricardo, you are just going to disappoint yourself. People like you, Mexican people, are not born to do those kinds of things. You should accept who you are... Mexicans don't become poets and writers." Such memories must have continually fueled his passion for others similarly put down.

His forthrightness annoyed many, but beneath the indignation, which along with a natural facial expression that was often misconstrued as self-centered anger, was a deeply compassionate, kind and generous human being. Famed Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, who spent many years of exile in Chile and was a



close friend of Che Guevara, also knew Ricardo and invited him to participate on stage during an invited poetry reading at WSU. After learning of the cancer, he wrote to Ricardo: "*Decir que tú eres el poeta - es poco. Tú eres el poeta no solo de la poesía, sino el poeta de la vida...*" Among Ricardo's legacies are the people living today who can attest to being empowered because he helped them accept their potential for greatness.

In October of 1992, Ricardo was invited to give testimony at the International Tribunal of Indigenous Peoples and Oppressed Nations in the USA, initiated by the American Indian Movement. In his transcribed testimony, he recounts an incident when he was invited to perform poetry all day long in the high school at Eagle Pass, Texas which was almost 100% Chicano (ca. 1987-88). At the end of the day, one of the school's teachers angrily accused him of lying to the students by telling them they all had greatness in them. Ricardo said: "How did I lie? What I told the children was that every human being, every creature born, has an inherent capacity for greatness, and that we must somehow explore ourselves and arrive at our personal greatness, so we can add to human society. A beautiful, meaningful measure of realization with our lives. I believe we are all born to enjoy life, and share the wonder of humanity."

Ricardo led students in his creative writing classes to publish an anthology of their work at the end of each semester. A group of students, eventually calling themselves The Palousian Poets, emerged and became a recognized campus organization. They held several public poetry readings in downtown Pullman and, when Ricardo became ill, supported him all the way, including a fund-raising poetry reading on his birthday on March 29 which Ricardo attended, though by then he was much thinner and weakly voiced. The Poets wanted to make the occasion especially meaningful for Ricardo by inviting another famous poet and friend, but repeated attempts to make contact were unsuccessful and discouraging. They held another reading to honor him after his passing. It is a mystery as well as one of Ricardo's greatest disappointments that so few, perhaps two or three, Chicano students chose to join him in making important statements through poetry. Perhaps the rest never knew the real Ricardo. There were no Chicanos among The Palousian Poets.

Ricardo has carved a permanent space in American literature and gained international respect for his activism and literary work. Stanford University purchased his papers, which were inaugurated on March 24, 1993. His close colleague at WSU, Dr. Daniel Estrada, began a project last year to permanently establish the Ricardo Sánchez Summer Institute in Chicano Studies. There are those who will assure him a rightful place in the literature, including Dr. Felipe de Ortego y Gasca, who stated in an e-mail note to me right after Ricardo's death: "When I reviewed *Amsterdam Cantos* for the MELUS Journal I cited Ricardo as one of the great universal poets, a truly gifted American poet in the tradition of Whitman. He deserves more than he has received in recognition"

When Norma and I saw Ricardo and Teresa off at the Spokane airport in May of 1995, he weighed no more than 140 pounds. Gone was the vibrant spirit he had brought to Pullman a few years before. The strong bond of marriage to Teresa remained. I would not see him again, and we could only speak the strong language of silence. So there were no words that morning, only a final hug as he sat in the wheelchair before he was assisted onto the plane. There would be no more menudo suppers. There were no good-byes, only a photograph to capture the sacred moment.

Well, Ricardo,  
a year later I still sit alone  
in those familiar gathering places  
musing over the important things  
we once discussed  
when we hoped for better times  
for our families, our pueblo, our universe.

You are now spared the campus politics  
but in my many moments of forgetfulness  
I still await the return of a great poet.

I turn back the clock in my mind  
and try to re-adjust the past  
but it's no use,  
so I look for another one like you  
to appear on the horizon.

It's going to be a very long wait.

**(A CD copy of *The Ricardo Sanchez' Anthology* will be available soon. The Table of Contents is provided for your perusal.)**



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