

far from El Paso/Juárez,

an alien solar beam
dances.. I recall
mariachi strains, reach out
and find...new borders...
Pullmanía 25° julio 93

=FRONTERAS:::BORDERS =

A hazy day in the Palouse. The almost summer sun graces the late July waving wheatfields. In the horizons within I see a swirling land of desert dunes, rattlesnakes, yucca and mesquite. Here I search for shards, evidence of previous native existence as the borders of my land seem to draw together, squishing a country into conformity and sameness. The mild sun little by little blanches the land, giving a once verdant field of wheat a bleached look, so that solar rays bounce off the sheaves at mid-afternoon and burnish my mestizo eyes, forcing me to look deep within into the many peoples and cultures residing in my Chicano *ánima*.

It is one of those moments far from spiritual outcry and deitical affirmation, yet well within a people and culture who have lost the means to see anyone but themselves. They walk right through my sense of the earth, as if I did not exist, not that I am invisible, for they can see me once I shout that they are stepping on me, trampling my culture with their Tacofications and noxious Enchurritos, and gerrymandering me into smaller cubby hell holes. Then they fix an eye on me and coo out numerous "excuse me's" while shoring up their resolve to inquire as to "Why do you want to be Chicano?" perplexities.

Whatever reverie possible is fragmented, tattered, by the incessant and droning queries buzzing into my ears. "Why?" "Can there be a why to anything that is beyond one's ability to choose?" I ask myself, while stumbling over the many logjams in the Río Grande of my mind, so that other lifegiving ideas get waylaid before they can be breached that I might have a better chance at making sense of my multifaceted humanity and the meaning I could share from a bilingual dialogue with my outer selves.

My eyes wander over the historic landscapes of the peoples who created me out of the many clays of this hemisphere and the other continents across two oceans. The pre-Columbian in me chances to sing of mangoes, aguacates, jitomates, papayas, bananas, chiles and chocolates ; the wheat of flour tortillas ululates while playing castenets and inveigling me to flamenco onto the gitano outcries of Iberia merged with Moorish sensibilities as Saracen blades fence with Castillian guitars. A deep, bellowed *olé* shakes up the Plaza. The many peoples and bloodlines of my cultures enter the arena and face the sand-pawing Tauran Universe. The colors of my vestments refract the burnishing power of Padre Sol while my slippered feet stamp on la Madre Tierra receiving my rivuletting bloods, as I cross-over again into another image of my humanity montaging itself unto the ever expanding mutual humanity of my passages through time, history and space.

I glance quickly at the Náhuatl poem, the mirror of jade honed to reflect the many selves you and I are of each other, and your wonderment graces me with the smile I first gave my other self at that moment consciousness became mine. All the while you were also creating another sense of yourself, an awareness of our being but refractive bits of

time and space, each a salient expression of a humanity needing to find and express its mutuality with itself.

The boundaries existing only within notions, but not at all within the skeins of desires for loving affirmations, just within the fears crafted from our ignoring our reflections:: we avert our eyes, hoping to not be visible in our fears and discomfiture, wanting to concretize our self-imposed limits, and we cry out inanties posing as witticisms= "mejor malo por conocido que bueno por conocer"*=only to re-encounter our fearful selves wandering through the same terrain, desirous of venturing beyond the confines of our birthing.

I touch the refractive glass and feel opaque Azteka eyes question me. In the foreground stands the bearded Cortez, herniated from carrying the cross and cannon of Iberian greed founded on 700 years of Arabic domination. A slow burning outcry begins to gel as human humus rises upward, engulfing an America where bronze and brown tinctures are only welcome if they emanate from bottled confections bought at Ultra-White's Olde Drugstore and Humanoidal Emporium =o=

drums eviscerate
churning embroilments,
historic images
carouse
through a grousing sense
of a humanity quartered
and somehow distorted,
contorted and resorted
into blanched discolorations,

"Who could I have been, if only the bleaches of conquest had not taken my forefathers' lands from them that I would be born a foreignor in the lands of my ancestors?"

The question resonates as historic pains reverberate through labyrinthine passageways; I stumble down steep jungle walls, struggle to grab-hold of vines only to feel my hands slashed by barbs and razor-leaves of verbiage hurling vicious verbs and diatribes at my ontology. On the wall I see the shadow cast by a grandparent whose tongue speaks the poetry of the Talmud, the hooklike nares grant me the sounds of other deserts far from the Pueblos of a beloved Simona, grandmother born in San Juan beneath the shadows cast by the Sangre. de Cristo range where Coronado or Oñate or some other sentient spirit cast a Moorish ululation that Allah might also bless a tired sojourner far from a Moraccan oasis, far from dates and camels and gitano magia being musicated into flamenco boots giving a bass accompaniment to a tenor guitar wailing soulful serenades to doncellas in Estremadura or at least Sevilla: Olé, poéte maudit, olé,

here, far from the God
of loving kindness,
bestride the borders
of horrid limitation

and genocidal lynchings,
the song arises
each time to celebrate
the brevity of each poet
casting cards, beads and odes

the words emerge slowly, delicately. Each is fragmented, pain seared. My mind's sinewy, timorous extremities reach out tenuously to assuage the broken words, caressing the stilted, terrified sounds, coaxing them to break through the silences, to somehow find within the supple strength to survive the absurdity of barbarous dehumanization.

Fence posts at the horizon of each reverberant sound mock the emerging attempts at mutual realization, and each fragment struggles almost futilely to reconcile alien with alien, so that the very Mother of our desperation cries out a personal desecration as we assail each other in order to commit another bout of matricide. rVe jumo uson the earthen crack, break our mutual humanity's Mother's back and resume pounding on each other as our bloods and vital juices blend and our sensibilities momentarily rejoice in our concomitant humanity, in a merging which becomes a sonorous Mexican corrido paying homage to our Mestizo birthing.

*better a known evil than an unknown good; a Spanish proverb

Azteka and Espanol have mated,
a mestizo child gurgles
poetical cantos
merging Náhuatl and Castellano,
while to the North scurry forth
a familia of mestizo verbs & nouns,
Native Rojo and Iberian Blanco

unfurl bronze
as a burnished humanity
bathes in the life
of bloods and cultures
weaving confluence and
mutual enjoinments
into a new people
born unto la madre tierra
and the padre sol,

far away, in the land of the fathers, there is the sneer of the landed gentry who deny meaning or worth to all children born with the lustre of a Mestizo's humanizing diversity; here, on this, our very soil, the peoples of our mothers smite us with contempt, and, in our being few and scattered about, we feel the lance or lash as we hungrily reach out to touch the beings who gave us life only to forsake us.

The drums of native insensibility rival the bugles of insensate peninsular isolationists in ignoring the clamoring outcries of discarded infants crying for a prodigal parentage waging war against one another:

we seek your shadowy beings
along moonlit lanes, wanting
to hear your voices reach out
in celebration of our being
one with each of you, but we
see and hear you slashing at
each other's culpability
for having created us...

Once, centuries ago, each of you was a vast number while we = your progeny = were few and, to your reckoning, very insignificant. Ridiculed for our mestizage, we felt the barriers erected by you to keep each other at bay while also closing off your worlds to us, your sons and daughters.

In the disordered border where San Diego winks at Tiajuana, not that far from an El Paso cajoling Ciudad Juarez, it is all the same charade, the masquerade, I picked up the words and notes and serenaded a hungry people into once again believing in the turgid truths of cultural upheaval as I changed my name to give substance to migratory existence, became the Ritchie with a T, a boneless vagabond strumming a guitar as I took a folksy veracruzana night out of the steaming jungles of Mexico and criss-crossed-cultura onto a honky-tonkified-bamba sans Afrikan passions. La Raza took la bamba and woolly-boollied itself into a capirozada of a pudding, struggling mightily to arrive at meaning between the walls of differences separating each one of us into fragmented beings grafted onto the culture arising from genocide, fratecide and plain old exploitation. Inside the margins, sewn deeply onto the seams of a hodge-podge world of infidels, believers, aliens and de-imaged original folks, I fought the turbulence of depatriation with a pain-seared outcry gurgling, striving to be free:::the poem seethed,

born unto a burnished
people ideating itself
into a canto singing
liberation, I sought
within historic pains
a rationale response
to invisibility, to
the muted notes
strangling themselves
in the societal ears
which only hear
the resonance of jolly
olde brits, not spics
nor injuns nor ssades,
not even slants
even tho' they know

how to create wealth,
my hands,worked to the bone
and bleeding from time
slashing and history gashing,
carved from the barren
earth and molten rock
the cross Delgado's
troubled Chicano youth
with a big knife
yearned to carve, all
the while the master
works of art
fermented in a desert
picasso's mindsoul,
so near the border
and so far from a
Creator willing to create
an Eden anywhere near
a waterless grand old river.

We swam through the loam and mud, our chamaleon hopes and wishes landed on granite brittleness as the sun scorched our minds and our souls recoiled from the epithets awaiting us a few centuries down the line. That was nearly five-hundred-years ago when our Spaniard-Moorish conquering selves first stepped upon this soil and claimed the land for King, Country and Bounty Seeking Deity, that universal creator, binding Iberian lineage to Native Song of Human Spiritual Expression, that a mestizo people might arise someday to populate America before the arrival of Euro-Amerikan mercenaries with bibles in one hand and missiles in the other, that we might get the bibles while they would take our land in trades buttressed by coercion and duress. Borders sprang up, even railroad tracks were laid and separation on the streets and most especially between the sheets worn by pointy-headed racists riding night skies to terrify the children of the sun.

It is now 1993, year after the 500th anniversary of people merging and confluence of cultural outcries. We now all live at the edges of our borders, in the cusps between all elements of our humanity, hungry for a mutuality which we might yet get to celebrate if only we find ourselves within each other's reflection of the universe.

I feel your eyes
burrowing into mine
your warmth as human
as is that of mine
children and mate,
I find us within you
while you become
but another slant
of me, us, them
and you, o cosmic

being at the edges
of our most mutual humanity,
force open the doors
and enter into
the power of human meaning
within you, me, us..

A breeze sways the Palouse, caresses me and I wander back into a Southwestern Universe where all humanity is merging through struggle into a solar burnished golden folks. The barriers are slowly being broken, and though a bloody war still ensues, the future sings of human realization...birthing is ever a bloody, painful outcry, one of breaking down the borders.....

(For a complete copy of *The Ricardo Sanchez Reader, Critical Essay and Anthology* Search for *Ediciones Nuevo Espacio*. The Table of Contents is provided for your perusal.) A CD of an Anthology of Ricardo Sánchez Poetry will be available soon.

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