*A Return to My Nativist Land*

It is a dark-clothed fluorescence,

outside 3-footed stairways,

In torso-sized tables,

sleeveless old men slam dominos. In half-toothed grin,

fiddling wit’ *s*traw hats strings. *Una balasera de espa***ñ***ol*

riddling the pavement.

Ten dollar radio crackles a tipsy *bachata*.

It is a shirtless boy, stuffing his finger to

corners of his mouth. Kinky hair peek-a-boos his face,

mother watches nearby. I kneel to greet his eyes,

an abrupt brown, like *el mestizaje*.

It is a world,

underneath his eyelash.

As it peels open, he

stares at the labyrinths of documents

tucked ‘neath my arms.

His voice

softly beating against my chest,

chanting,

“*Qué Esperas*?”

I

*Why was I Picked and Groomed by America as its Token Curator?*

There is a house in ruins.

Fenced, a relic *nacido ayer*.

Borrowed existence past overdue*.*

Militant gauze,

ceaseless forsake of rugged-faced gods,

banging against its iron mesh,

 And

I, in observatories of privilege .

The Americanization of a spic

 Theorize, essay, posit.

The way a drunkard miscalculates

a doorstep.

Studying its archaeology, dicta in unwashed *comales*.

Wrought archway, empty *bodegas*,

Chuy’s *última cena*. Arrested for trespassing

 Tar-carpeted streetlights,

moon still laughin’,

 Imprisoned,

 ‘hind a squad car. *y* America,

illiterate to her own hatred,

before sunrise,

tailored his baseball cap

for a burglar’s disguise.

Shot between the eyes. Shrugging her shoulders, she hiccupped,

“Must’ve committed suicide.”

 *La gente* trade-in the 2-job hustle,

congest the public square

-- the lungs of democracy --

for a vigil march.

Richochets and unrequited moans. Dialectic of

the wretched,

*El Grito de Dolores -* resurrected

Tears forged by injustice n’ gas.

Sliding a *rosario*

 chanting, “the first shall be last”

And suddenly,

we appear human.

We can cry.

I walk across this house’s hallways,

 steeped in mythology:

beaten-in folklore, trodden nursery rhymes.

Stained glass bleeding ‘gainst

a stolen sunlight.

Oiled portraits of

pale-faced Presidents, a God that’s white.

Golden chandeliers; the violence as career

At the ceiling, not naked skylight,

but Renaissance,

a nostalgia that excludes.

Genesis slept with genocide and conceived a culture.

*donde* ‘I’ is, am, irrelevant.

And yet,

 Under its pillars-- the chiseled torso and blue-eyed--

lies Black Atlas,

chanting His own requiem.

This sanctuary of ignorance,

Fanon trembles from his lips, “is

a world of statues, of leisure

a world cocksure of itself.

a Hell *dentro nuestros brazos*.

Were it not for ferocious watchdogs, guarding it.

A labyrinth, secular psalms.

Men dressed in crisp business,

before Kafka’s Law.”

I step out,

*todo norteado*,

remembering where I began.

A freeway-exit

stands,

between the frozen sea,

within us

and the New Man.

*Y por el camino*,

I dreamt of palm-sized mangoes; the

 culture of a jagged sidewalk; of clothes drying on

a front porch,

never worn out.

Instead,

At the end of the hallway,

I pry my lips against the fence,

Shaken, to *ese himno*

That I no longer recognize.

Groping for

*mi ni***ñ***ez*,

Outside a scanty church

 An aging tricycle rests,

The tassels ripped, stickers filed off.

 Time’s strewn ‘cross the lot.

The Earth urn-ed its letters

in caution tape.

World its footnote, punctuated by

the illusion of movement.

*Pero ya te digo.*

Passing by the door,

an old man *me saluda*. Air of a fallen pastor,

slouched against a crackling radiator. He

counts his change, chuckling,

“*Young man, young man*

*Yo arm’s too short*

*To box with God*…”

Inside, an orgy to forget.

Mass is high, and the

Icarian rituals, I no longer perform.

Liquor-laced melodies, --words anesthetic--

 seeking to transcend the wage-labored sun. Bodies either exhaust,

swerve to temptation. Worshippin’ broads

with the fattest chest.

Or

worse,

 nothing…

It’s been 20 years,

this *paisa* Odyssey. This

*Muséo del Otro*,

Hidden in plain sight. To this

Striptease of our humanism. To this

White House that exists, because they,

I

mean,

we.

I

mean

they.

I mean

we -

don’t!

Behind the crucifix, a terra-cotta throne, where

a barefooted queen sits.

Black Rose cocked to her hair.

Poised, in a dress bathed in gold,

she rises.

i kneel,

 gazing at the roaring *cerros,*

the jungle deafens to her hand.

*Los siglos* ingrained in stone.

I speak tell me,

O’ Muse, *reina de todo*,

dipped in marigold,

. *Te lo suplico,*

Why was I

picked and groomed by America

as its token curator?