

Hay Felicidad en Todas Partes

After Gabriela H. Jarquín's photograph, "Planeta"

The climbing bougainvillea drops
A paper bud on the mud floor
It is not a flower
It is actually a bract and
Ana Gabriel is playing on Manuel Alvarez Bravo
For the whole block to hear
El puesto de taquitos fritos
Tiene una cola hasta la esquina

Y aunque Juan Gabriel *no le sienta*
Nada bien la soledad, mi parte favorita
Del día es cuando dejo de platicar
De correr de un mandado a otro
Y me siento aquí, contigo
A escuchar las espinas
Del maguey, la lluvia sobre sus brazos

En una plaza aquí cerca
Una niña con cola de caballo
Detiene una paleta
Bueno, el palito de una paleta
Tamaño Chupa Chups. Las hojas
De bougainvillea se mecen
En el airesito de la tarde
Y las nubes, bajo cual esa niña
Detiene el palito, también están contentas
La niña y su compinche, su prima o hermano
Para siempre sonrien, aunque no los veas bien
El sol sobre sus pestañas suspira

All of our babies are off playing
In front of Santo Domingo Church
And the City Terrace splash pad

This is not
A fucking Diego Rivera painting
Benevolent Brown children performing
Their labor for the viewer
This is a childhood of playing matatena
And of selling your puppy drawings to tourists
Of wiping windshields with olympic speed and height
Entrepreneurs unconcerned with how people
See you. She—the artist—went back
To doodling, drawing long dog ears

After I left, minus 20 pesos
Did I pay her enough for her work?
Girl:
You can only buy alegria
With that kind of money

Hay Felicidad en Todas Partes II

Después de la fotografía, "Planeta," de Gabriela H. Jarquín

Las buganvillas deslizan
Un capullo de papel sobre el suelo de barro, pero no es
Una flor. En realidad es una bráctea y alguien
Sobre la calle Manuel Alvarez Bravo toca una rola
De Ana Gabriel
Para toda la cuadra
El puesto de taquitos
Tiene cola hasta la esquina

Y aunque Juan Gabriel *no le sienta*
Nada bien la soledad, mi parte favorita
Del día es cuando dejo de cotorrear
De correr de un mandado a otro
Y me siento aquí, contigo a escuchar las espinas
Del maguey, la lluvia cayendo sobre sus brazos

En una plaza aquí cerca
Una niña con cola de caballo detiene una paleta
Bueno, el palito de una paleta tamaño
Chupa Chups. Las hojas
De la buganvilla se mecen
En el airesito de la tarde
Y las nubes, bajo cual esa niña
Detiene el palito, también están felices
El sol suspira sobre sus pestañas
La niña con su compinche, su prima, o hermano
Para siempre sonrien, aunque no los veas bien

Todos nuestros bebés están jugando
Frente a la Iglesia de Santo Domingo
O en el chapoteadero de City Terrace

Este no es un pinche cuadro de Diego Rivera
De niños benévolo y morenos actuando
En el teatro de su trabajo para un espectador
Esta es una infancia de matatena
Y de vender tus dibujos de perrito a los turistas
De limpiar parabrisas con velocidad y altura olímpica
Los empresarios no se preocupan por cómo la gente
Los ve. Ella--la artista--regresó
A su trabajo de trazar rayas, dibujando orejas largas de un perrito
Después de que me fui, menos 20 pesos
Pensé: "¿Le pagué suficiente por esa pintura?"
¿Ya pa qué pregunto?

Con esa cantidad
Sólo se compra alegría

My fingers sticky with

white sage. Do its leaves know you like this?
I do not. I know the night jasmine thicket
And nosedive into its blooms each May

Your hands are decorated in opals and beach sand
I am not quietly verdant. I drop my flustered
Moonstones on your desk, or
Are they yours? Is my river thirst hallucinating
A stripe of medicine between us?

I won't ignore the dead. I can't ignore song
Sparrows either. Nor the resting red-throat
Hummingbirds

You can't take me to the woods
And think I won't want the ridge

That I won't look for rabbits to cross
The path before us. Canadian geese cannot
Be mistaken for something else

I know there will be brambles but
My first home was by the river. Swallows
Remind me to keep walking along it
Walk towards it

Someone is sweeping behind me, but
What am I looking for?
A tongue to press against my typewriter
To drag my body along it
Another happy ending
That does not yet exist

Sometimes I make a wish
And the wrong answer appears
I must wait. Not nest
With whatever we find
Along the concrete: yellow twigs, duck feathers
Cigarette ash

You, bird, are none of those
But wait. I must
Watch love birds walk into waves. Methodical
Got us brass house keys and velvet hoods
But also steely solitudes

That protect us, but keep us apart

My river bed is dotted
With mallards, white cranes
Small whirlpools that roil gently
In my chest

I will shake
Your mother's hands to
Thank her for coming all this way
My mother is that transmitter, a
Natural sentinel

I should ask the full moon in Scorpio
If this is in love with love
But won't

I held a lock of hair
To my nose after brushing
Against you and I became
The bougainvillea—
Loud-pink, unruly barbed

What pull is here, what tide. What ours?
I'm still thinking about the bluffs
That it is not enough to name
The scattered bodies of Cormorants
I want to know what to call you

What do you call wanting to pin
A kiss on the swallow of someone's wrist
Against a live oak?

Look at this tiny orange flower
It is something else
Think long and hard
The other way

Swallows near me
Sing to clear a path I might take

Is this me, telling you
where to put your hands?

I want to live in the before, in rest
A wave crest
But we make plans
That I now see

You will forget

But I am also the chrome rims
A hot butch fade
With a Tecate
Is shining
It is time
To drive away

I am a Ford truck
Hot wheels-blue, full
Of sunflowers, tires wide
With dreams
Of popping wheelies
A real lover's careful hands
In my hair
Then, holding my face
Near the ripe red poppy