

The bones rattle in their new boxes

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“Hay muertos que no hacen ruido y son mayores sus penas”

Refrán popular guardado hasta el presente
en el pensamiento de Antonio Esquivel,
Mora, New Mexico

The bones rattle in their new boxes,
Tibias clacking against pelvis bone,
Cuadriles dancing cuadriles
The only sounds you have made in hundred years
Your spirits hover above in our thinking
as your bones journey below
Our songs are older than these bones,
As old as purgatory and as clear as Saint Paul’s letters
Mirrors open up in the gray, chrome sky
Between the road to Bernalillo
and the fields of Lauro Aragón,
Dry, dry, dry now in climate change.

You were lost to us in a flood,
Floating in earthmud till the waters receded
You went downstream, we thought,
To turn into silt near the Gulf of Mexico,
Only now do we understand how you never meant to leave to us.
Rose García points us to Ezekiel,
“The hand of the Lord came upon me,
and led me out in the spirit of the Lord
and set me in the center of the plain,
which was now filled with bones.”
And so you let the water rush over you,
Wrapped your sinewy parts around the
Driftwood and cizaña until you were
Deposited again, again and again deep in

The arteries and ditch banks of your once lush fields.
Where you came to rest patiently next to Domino's Pizza.

—¿Santiago Gurulé, no oyes el crujir de mis huesos?
--Pero tan quieta que te has quedado, Amelia,
tan cambiada mujer.
—¿Será que mis oídos están tapados de tierra?
— ¿O te quedaste arrumbada como chancla vieja detrás de algún tabique?
—Santi soñé no sé qué noche entre tantas y tan oscuras,
que Inés Tafoya iba agarrada de la mano de Vidal, el herrero,
ilícitos huyendo rumbo a la sierra.
—Amelia, la muerte no te ha quita'o lo chismosa.
—Santi ¿qué pesadilla sin fin es ésta
de esperar sin esperanza el bien de Dios?
— ¿Te pasa como a mi que la boca me sabe a ventoretas de tierra? ¡ay de
nosotros!
—Ayúdame a pasar el rato platicando.

Qué curioso cuando los difuntos se dejan oír,
Odd too, that you have let yourselves be seen,
At San Carlos camposanto, spirits come to see bones,
Mostly out of curiosity.
They join our singing as a late winter squall sweeps the high bluff
The snowflakes swirl and kiss our foreheads,
Anoint rock, dirt, plastic roses, headstones, stoles, the new dead and old dead
And those left standing in the commandment to live together.

The workmen drop each box of quaking bones.
Passing through the earthdoor,
you press on with your bone journey just ahead of us;
Remembering your houses, your fields, the horses you rode,
The love you left in the loins of your descendents
A hundred years rush by in whispers and your bones say,
“De la tierra fui formado,
La tierra me da de comer,
La tierra me ha sostenido,
Y al fin yo tierra he de ser.”
and the call goes out from one brother to another:
“por las ánimas de los difuntos de la plaza
de Alameda todos debemos rogar”
the mountain swells, inhales the expansive horizon,
and the grey sky responds:
by the grace of God I am what I am.



“Segundo entierro” foto/photo by Miguel Gandert

Note:

In 2003 a City of Albuquerque trenching crew uncovered some human bones near a busy intersection in the central Río Grande community of La Alameda. The accidental discovery resulted in the excavation and identification of the remains of 123 people who had been buried in the graveyard of the first church built on this stretch of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in 1710. Massive flooding in 1903 wiped away the old church and the *camposanto* and moved the riverbed from the eastern to the western edge of the flood plain. After much study University of New Mexico archeologists recently returned the remains to the Alameda community.

On January 29, 2013 these Alameda ancestors were finally reburied during graveside services led by the parish priest and Bishop Ignacio Tafoya a native of Alameda. In four large wooden boxes crafted by parishioners, the dead were honored with prayers and *alabados* by the local families and the members of *La Fraternidad de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* who were invited for the services since there were as many as four Morada chapels in the area.