

Who Is Going To Tell Me?

for España

España,
golden father of my ancestors,
who captured my mother as slave,
stripped her naked,
plowed treasures from her shores.

To you,
who claims hills most green, wine most sweet,
Spanish most precise, devotion most fervent,
whose structured guitar the most elegant
and flamenco the most graceful.

To you, initiate
whose model blessed/cursed this western land
where Columbus uncovered
his wealthy Caribbean key,
opening the door to Española/Santo Domingo,
giving birth to the history of a million shames,
where the thousand names of kings,
imamus, caciques and warlords
were secrets disguised, abolished,
dissolved into myriads of bloodlines,
claiming invisible records, unwritten,
stolen from the lucious continents.

To you, father of my father,
whose table graced our tobacco fields,
whose whip increased the abundance
of our sweet cane, grinding sweat from roots
to water your rose garden of thorns.
Whose court inspired our danzón, corrido,
and gracious bomba,
giving rise to a new African drumbeat—
the flight of the ball and chain,
creating the formulation of new words:
esclavo, cimarrón, slave, rebel.

To you, who hides
in mountains of golden courtly seals
inside handwrought manuscripts

from the age of Ferdinand.
On whose gilded pages are inscribed
the names of my great grandmothers?
Inside what illustrations can be located
the landmark homes of my great grandfathers?
On the maps of which islands
rest their simple graves where I
may pay homage to my ancestors?
In whose kingly court did my great grand-aunts
wet nurse the master's brats (perhaps a future
uncle, or slightly remembered landowner)?
And which of my grand cousins were teachers,
masters of their craft, respected noblemen,
and women of wisdom?
In whose library will I find their books
and tales of their lives?
On which ships did my captured relatives sail?
At which ports did their feet first land?
To which colonies were relatives dispersed?
To Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia,
Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru,
the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Jamaica, Haiti,
the Caribbean Antilles, the Mexican Coast,
Panama, Yucatan, the Thirteen Colonies,
New Orleans, Virginia, South Carolina,
Mississippi, Alabama, Nueva York?

To you, singing canticles
of Spanish kings of Barcelona,
where Maximillian danced
his Roman feast of world conquest,
forming the anguished tears of Goya,
forging the broken cubes of Picasso,
giving substance to the cries of Garcia Lorca.
In all your illustrious bounty
hides a legacy denied
Yet, not one line of testimony
to this truth of shame,
nor one admission of guilt,
nor humble apology,
nor effort to replace what was defiled,
dismembered.

To you, España, prize of Europe,
host to the colonized West,
solicitor of rich ports,
seducer of saintly Indians,
golden father of my ancestors,
who captured my mother as slave,
stripped her naked,
plowed treasures from her shores.

I want to know your future.
What new paintings will be created
on whose walls?
Whose names will emerge
in which new brilliant journals?
What melodies will evolve from our mixings?
In whose gardens will we water our vision?

I want to know
who will decide our fate?
You, or I,
or WE together?

Will I be free
to discover my own path,
uncover a new journey
no one else has known,
design my life spaces
in my natural colors
tropical parades of evergreens,
caribbean blue seas, sand surfaces,
mountain-rain-banana-leaf horizons.

I want to know.
Who is going to tell me?

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