



Fall 2013

Latin-America

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Abstract

A poem describing the Prince George's County and Montgomery County Latin American communities in Maryland.

Keywords

Latin America, immigrant, ethnicity, Prince George's County, Montgomery County, Maryland, Latino, family, Spanish

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Latin American Languages and Societies | Latin American Literature | Latin American Studies | Poetry | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies

Comments

Honorable Mention - Academy of American Poets Marion Zulauf Poetry Prize 2014

This poem was written for Professor Nadine Meyer's English 405: *The Poet's Voice* course, Fall 2013.

Mauricio Novoa
Poet's Voice
Meyer

Latin-America

“Tu no puedes comprar el viento, Tu no puedes comprar el sol
Tu no puedes comprar la lluvia, Tu no puedes comprar el calor
Tu no puedes comprar las nubes, Tu no puedes comprar los colores
Tu no puedes comprar mi alegría, Tu no puedes comprar mis dolores”
-Chorus from the song “Latinoamérica” by Calle 13

I used to always accompany *mi Abuela*
From Glenmont to PG County for grocery shopping
At the Mega Market, a Giant for Latinos looking
For somewhere like home to swipe their EBT Cards.
Salvadoreños like her, running from the Civil War
And flooding DC like the *Rio Lempa*, post up
In front of the supermarket, some selling *pupusas*
From a truck in the parking lot, others taking a break
From the register or from putting food away in the aisles,
Others just smoke cigarettes in white crew necks,
And jeans ripped, not for style but from outdoor labor,
Work boots covered in mud or gravel, talking about
Barcelona vs. Real Madrid, or how bad they hope Mexico
Doesn't make it to the World Cup, or beat anyone for that matter –
When it comes to sport, there is no peace between rivals.

The aisles were clumped tight, with barely room for one cart
To make it to the other side, but the store felt a lot livelier
Than most of the chain grocers in my neighboring shopping center,
The way my family parties seemed a lot more bumping
Than some other parties, with my uncles,
Papi, and his friends cracking Coors and Coronas, and *mi Mami*
And my aunts sipped *vino* while everyone talked about how their damn kids
Never pull up their pants and always listen to that *pinche* Reggaeton
Or *música de los negros*, while they blasted their Santana in the speakers
In the backyard, not going to bed til the Witching hour.

I walk by the candles with *los Santos* and *Jesucristo* painted
On the glass, and I remember all the chains with crosses
My *Abuela* gave me, usually after my nightly prayers
That I memorized like my name but never knew what they meant,
Much like most of the words she said to me in conversation.
She always regretted not teaching us enough Spanish,
But my *Ingles* was so mastered, she heard as she sits in my childhood

Home while I am away at school, that her grandson
Could grow to be one of those writers he actually **can** read.
In my right hand, I held every dream and prayer she had for me,
Being able to walk the street with more of a guarantee of life
Than she ever saw, which to her was more golden than money.
Now I can pen the visions of Oscar Romero without a bullet in my lens.