

icance to it. Yet, when I thought about all of the pollution, the wars over oil, the debate over global warming, I wondered if it was really such a great thing.

A silence fell between us. It didn't seem as though Ava was going to have anymore of her food, and it seemed inappropriate for me to continue eating.

"Would you like me to start a fire?" I asked.

"Yes. That would be great, thank you."

Ava got up and moved to the couch, pushing the blankets into a corner. While I found Tupperware and put her food in it for her to have later, Ava sat in the semi-darkness of the living room, her slender hands folded in her lap. She seemed to be looking at nothing at all, yet her head was directed toward the empty fireplace. I doubted if anything I had said had reached her. I felt my chest tighten with anxiety as I wondered what I should do.

"Would you like me to take you to the hospital?"

"No. No, I'm never going back there if I can help it." Ava said flatly, and continued to stare into the fireplace.

I didn't feel like it would be right to leave her alone, yet when it came time for her to ask me to leave I couldn't very well say otherwise. It seemed to me that, short of strapping someone to a bed or locking them in a padded cell, it really was quite impossible to control someone. I didn't want to see either of those things happen to my friend anyway, so I figured the best thing I could do was to simply spend time with her.

I went over to the fireplace and started tearing up the cardboard boxes that had been stashed in another larger cardboard box for kindling. Before long a healthy fire was crackling above the hearth. I sat on the far end of the couch away from Ava. I watched as the dancing light of the flames played across her emaciated face. The emptiness that had haunted her grey eyes seemed to lift in the glow of the fire.

We sat there watching the fire dance. It seemed to take on a life of its own the longer we watched it. It would grow merry and become subdued as logs were added and logs were burned. I thought about how when we left it for the night it would be reduced to ashes, its life and warmth lost to the universe. That fire that had danced for us that night would burn only once. That was the last time I saw my friend.

FOR MY LATINOS

DIANA ALGOMEDA

For my people dreaming about the American Dream,
Giving up their family, money, culture, food,
friends, Spanish, music, and home, falling
for the promises of a dream

For my people whose bravery is unstoppable
they take their skills and virtues as their only luggage
La Bestia, the border, danger, fear, confusion,
running, walking, hiding, broken bodies,
Never knowing, never understanding,

For my people blamed of taking jobs
missing their families trying to survive,
by digging, planting, picking, cutting, packing,
Cleaning, washing, scrubbing, cooking, babysitting
Never gaining, never understanding,

For my people, their struggle is real
Living in the shadows suffering demeaning names
Beaner, fence-hopper, landscaper, handyman,
Wetback, fruit-picker, illegal alien,

For my people, victims of a dream
Hondurans, Salvadorans, Mexicans,
Gone for years and the dream not yet achieved
Bleeding hands, scraped knees, painful backs
Why do we fall for the American dream?

(Continued)

For my people seeking their strong voices, gone,
My people, who have much to offer if given a chance
My hard working people, not criminals,
For my people with dark skin, dark hair, dark souls
Because the American dream has filled them with smoke.

Let my people work. Let their beauty be shown.
Let the music be heard. Let their bodies heal.
Let my people escape the fear of deportation.

TRUTH SEEKING MISSILES

KYLE TURNER

darker days of a different weight
have torn their way back out
from beneath the pebble of despair
– deep within the ocean of the mind.
the poet's hand reaches for blue skies
but grabs nothing but time – the body
fades into violent hues of salty tides,
and in the waking hours of evil, the pile
of bones at the bottom bubbles
in a crystalline iridescence.
it bursts forth in beautiful chaos –
with reckless abandonment;
 for if time
has become the body then the poet
is universal and these words transcend
the abstract notion of today.
 and if time
has become the body, then the limitations
of an evolved consciousness must surpass
the internalized heartbeats of dead fathers.
 and if time
has become the body, and every atom
of carbon echoes in the laughter of lost
memories – i'll be waiting in the jungle's
womb with the blood of an unborn revolution
stolen from the coral reefs.