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Para las mujeres de Juárez: la perseguidora y las perseguidas

For the Women of Juárez: The Haunted...and the Hunted

Ron Friedman

"The word 'death' is not pronounced in New York, Paris or London, because it burns the lips. The Mexican in contrast, is familiar with death, jokes about it, caresses it, sleeps with it, celebrates it, it is one of his favorite toys and most steadfast love." - Octavio Paz from *La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead*

¿Sabes tú cuanta energía he perdido lamentándome?

Yo soy la pila de huesos que ellos encontraron.

Do you know how much energy I spend in grieving?

I am strong and frail, the set of bones they found. The bones they said were yours.

But the fingers were too short, stubby.

Yours slipped like skinny cats through the planks of the back fence.

Your fingers slid through your inky hair like rich, elegant pens.

But my fingers are old now. Old and stubby, stained like fossils from writing letters. Old with mute noise scratched on papery appeals. Old from twisting ear lobes and lips and spinning strands of hair stained red with tears. *Yo soy la pila de huesos de ella a te.*

I am your bones now, Silvia. Your scarred remains my only beauty mark. I stare at the image in awe, much like I stood carrying you to the mirror when you sat pregnant inside me. Long and bony then, too...but alive. How I knew you. My mystery girl. The mystery girl I would spend my lifetime knowing and loving. That mystery now buried beneath the bitter shrubs of Juárez.

And I choke on this mound of dirt.

I am buried there with you. My baby. Where are you my baby? Where are you, Silvia? I hear your laugh in my bones. I hear your screams in my bones. What did those *monsters* (*cabrones*) do to you? Did they pull you off the shelf like a bag of chips?

Did they crush every gram of dignity from you?

A dignity that adorned you like new baby's blood!

I cannot think of you like that. My eyes close and the darkness surrounds your life...you dancing in the garden of weeds that grew like good neighbors in our backyard. My eyes close on the dancing rings of marigolds tied loosely to your hair...to you kissing abuelita's leathery hands.

Mis ojos cierran y la obscuridad me rodea. My eyes close on the black crosses and darkness surrounds my life...I fear it will close me off from you...you from me--like the night shuts a window on the day...But, my Baby--don't you worry...I won't *let* it. You will stay with me until El Hijo del

Díos comes down and fills us both with light. Ah, mi niñita, no te molestes...yo no permítelo. Tú te quedaré conmigo hasta Jesus Cristos viene y nos llene junto con luz.