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527 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
Woman Explorer

by Lynn Lonidier

rubbings by Cynthia and Bob Braaton
cover: maize serpent with
      Mayan youth emerging

photography by Margi Ide

graphics provided by Su Colella
For B.A. and all who spirit the sun

In the early cold part of this century, Edith Södergran, the "Emily Dickinson of Sweden," wrote:

_You will show me a wonderful land_
_where the palm trees stand high,_
_and there between the pillars_
_longing's waves go._

*From _We Women: Selected Poems of Edith Södergran_ translated by Samuel Charters, Oyez Press, 1977*
The Lost Land
of
Quintana Roo
(For Mark Linenthal)
IN SPANISH

Quintana R-o-o is pronounced “Keentana Row-ō”—
like a farmer’s row of crops
or “row your boat.”
But the land of Quintana Rōō
is more savannah
than Byzantine green evenings
or scarves of Susanna;
more four-inch visibility—
in machete carrying company,
known as four-inch jungle—
than Abyssinian maids
or pleasure tome.
Rōō rhymes with Mu
just as row
rhymes with Edgar Allan.
Keentana Row-ō means
the insurgent Mayan poet
who married Liberty Leona
and lived independent.
When where I grew
lifts off into the sea,
those left
at the crack of Nevada
will remember California
as an orange crate
thrown up on the waves.
O taste sea and be sightless!
Swallowed palace
of the unconscious,
silkhaired trees
and blueblouse sky—
California
is the Lost Land
of Quintana Rōō.
Even if California's gone,
I'm going to California
with my licoricestick dog,
unplugged magic lantern,
and armadillo's greenglass eyes.
To the beat
of an uneven metronome
on a brokendown camel's back,
we ride, banjo-strapped,
or o'er the waves
in a Chinamade wood box,
oar to Rōō.
PRICKLY PEAR AND THE CANARY

Long ago, natives identified me
as “Prickly Pear,” California variety.
Where skies are pierced by pyramids,
Lynn is changed into “Quintana Roo.”
Quintana Roo waited to see a raven
with canary-colored hair.
Raven never showed, but mosquitoes did.
“Where’s Lynn?”
I answered, “Hearl!”
It sounded like it came from the treetops.
Quintana Roo threw rocks down
to startle Canary on the ground.
Canary thought it was a snake
and was afraid.
Why a snake?
Raven-haired canary expected it.
If Canary wears green
where skies are held from falling through,
an iridescent canary with forest hair
is Quetzal Bird,*
with occasion feathers plucked to feed
the chieftain’s headdress.
I’m Quintana Roo, the Mayan poet,
not Indian chief
or freed bird of forest
either.

*The quetzal bird represented freedom to
the Mayan people and was sacred. Anyone
cought killing one, was killed.
TEACHERS' ITINERARY

The teacher I share this room with complains about
Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology's toilets.
Only one hotel towel and no washcloth we got.
The maids have gone home—no one can help the abyss.

Radio plugged in ear, I tell her I can't hear.
A half truth between my radio and me,
for it is not necessarily turned on.
She'll talk to me anyway, through herself, aloud.

I will tell her, he who talks to herself is crazy.
The exception: nothing is wrong with me crazy.
Cortez's revenge, she has a psychosomatic cough
that starts soon as she lies her down to sleep.

Asleep, she keeps me sleepless, listening to
Mexico City's poor celebrate the Festival of Futility
with beans beating inside balloons' stretched
entrails of streets' dark linings. City Santos

weaves his way in hayfield half light, yearful sleeps.
Swelling, late-caring afternoon, he's in Alameda Park
selling pinto nuts that resemble an Aztec mummy's
fingernails. Hark, the high school biology teacher

barks, makes students memorize what she's specimen of.
Snoring is welcome as dogs are magic in Mexico.
Music teacher and Andalusian dog, I turn her snores
into cellos of Villa-Lobos in the antediluvian night.
VILLAHERMOSA

In Villahermosa
the sky is made
by someone happy
painting nothing
but popcorn on blue ground.

Popcorn clouds
like overturned dogs
sacrificed on the road
to the cause
of a search for a morsel.

DREAM

Villahermosa.
Palms wave.
The jet ate up
the landing strip,
it's so short.
An old man
sniffs yellow hibiscus'
opened sun.
Hello steam.
Goodbye
Mexico City Pittsburgh.
Nobody here
cares whether they get
our luggage to us.
No other airplane today.
I am back
on the Southern California plantation
with Paulino
where the roses of Villahermosa
grow open.
ROSE AS MOTHER HEN

Rose with big Basque eyes,
the only teacher on earth who knows Spanish,
describes the martyrdom of the Basque people
as the eyes grow more
Spanish Civil War—
loses track of our way
at the Airport of All People.

LUNCH AT THE PYRAMIDS

If the plate
said: “Siesta,“
I’d put my head in it;
but it said:
“House of Chicken.”
On the walls above my head
were plaques of chickens
hanging by the neck.
GOODFAIRY SET A MAYAN DRAGONFLY FREE

A Mayan brown dragonfly flew into the Merida airport terminal same as I tried to pass to the world through glass.
I knelt and clasped the crucifix called “upended insect” in my palmleaf hands.
Would it crawl over me like rosary?
The captured pilot still wore goggles.
The wings barely fit.
I feared part break off.
The wavery legs felt like a watch working in my palm.
Would it stop?
I had no hands, but one door opened the other. Hinge of my hands broke hands’ cup
in half. Fast as a theft of memory, the precise jewelry lifted from my wearing.
Sunlight took its adornment:
cross welded in the mammalian sun;
diamond flight of dragon’s eye.
SAN FRANCISCO BUSHTOWN, MEXICO

Give California back to Mexico.
Over institutions, build pyramids;
that way, nothing is destroyed, only covered up.
San Francisco’s Transamerica building is a start.
The purpose of cities is not urban;
population centers are for ritual.
Punishment for adultery
is the adulterer’s intestinal tract
drawn through a hole in the stomach made day.
I won’t be a poet;
I’ll be a lamp mender.
100 cacao beans buys a slave—
enough beans to brew 25 cups of coffee.
There’ll be no single ruler.
Each will be a planet,
a glowing self-containment
of striated balls and eye cross.
If a Spaniard with a red beard appears,
Redbeard is given blue carpet treatment:
dip his tongue in mead,
touch chocolate to his fingertips.
It’s no earthquake, his lace cuffs erupt.
He’s not from San Francisco.
Get his heart and place it
in the ashtray on Chac Mool’s stomach.
Use the chest on which the red beard rests
as cave to build a flame shielded from
wind whipping along the Causeway of the Dead.
Save the ancient plan
Relight the temple fires.
NIGHT-TOSSED STAGES OF STARVATION

The evening two Norwegian travellers might have talked a Swede into sharing a chartered plane from Palenque to Bonampak, the teachers had gone to eat, and I lay listening to a parrot in a cage make all the sounds of the Mayan animal kingdom. The parrot accompanied my thinking of my kingdomless country.

A kingdomless country mouse gnawed a stomach that turned into a rat that ate a hole that didn’t satisfy that—that then became an elephant in a butterfly-filled windtunnel that shrunk into a butterlack heart.
Heart grew hungry, used itself for food.
The other organs followed suit, ate their selves, leaving a huge sack stomach.
Might as well put the body in that.
Bag of bones in the sun without wondering.

The night a gem of a teacher of jewels named “Rock” brought food and drink to my motel room, I would not have traded my 1975 eyes to feast on murals discovered at Bonampak in 1946 that “made a new analysis of Maya social organization possible.” One peeled grapefruit, one upped beer offset America’s future told by a parrot.
THE WALLED CITY

If a wall
is built around San Francisco
as it was at Mayapán,
it will keep out the ocean longer,
providing the wall does not succumb
to the earthquake
prior to the tidal waves.
The Mayans
have incredible sense of time.
Scientists say
one’s entire life
parades before the myopic eyes
of a drowning person.
Learning about life
instant before death
is a distraction from pain.

Of course,
not everyone will be able to live
inside the wall.
You will be weeded out
according to nobility
and knowledge
of the occult Zuyua language.
All others
are misfits. Of course,
through heredity,
you may stay—who would want?
The court that judges who
occurs once every twenty years.
Apply in 1995.
The Mayans’
timing
is marvelous.
Mayapán
thrived as long as the U.S.A.: two hundred years.
Then the Cocom
went to Xicalango
and brought in Mexicans.
The Cocom took over.
From then on, the city went downhill.
One day
when all the ruling Cocom
were in the walled city,
they were caught within
and slaughtered,
and the walls pulled down
on this,
the only known capital
of the Maya. This,
the pronouncement
of seven times 7,200 days
or twenty years of 360 days
to the minute.
Take yr pick.

The Mayans
were brilliant
at filling space.
San Franciscans
are not bad at it either,
and an earthquake
is a little like a jungle.
Take your pick
and pack your sack.
In the spilling face
of a red rising morning skyline,
the Fool is starting out—
the rosy countenance
of the Fool
with the Hourglass Face.
An earthquake, you say,
thick as a jungle beat?
Hoombah* hoombah hoombah hoombah—
rest of the way
is downhill, Baby—
HOOMBAH!

*Beat with fist on table, floor—
whatever your reading surface is—
making it shake with each “hoombah.”
COSMOPOLITAN

There is evidence they were here.  
Beneath the triangular hill—a shinbone clean of flesh.  
Beneath that naked hill—a suit of flayed skin.  
Houses stacked up until they lean together  
in corbelled arches at the top.  
Suburbs devastating as ever.  
Freeways agonizing at our backs.  
An accident on the road to the ruins.  
Man with a cross of blood on his face.  
People stand around, jolly-  
fastened to the holy configuration. People everywhere  
attracted to such places. People of all races  
take their fingers to the maps to these places.  
X marks the cross on which Spaniards put the Savior;  
Aztecs, the sun. Floating city of San Francisco  
and Mexico City founded on a floating garden:  
blue-artery trees, sanguine-veined flowers  
Montezuma oversaw on banks of human salt.  
Diego Rivera moved in both cities.  
Where he moved, gigantis promise sprang.  
Around this floating man, fingertips of the living  
made inanimates move. He saw two cities together,  
two countries—the North and South American continents,  
one. Around him, tongues slithered  
sinister utterances: “Do not let him paint this picture  
in our city.” Nelson Rockefeller told Diego  
to remove a bloom from Creation.  
Picasso knew better, Matisse knew better:  
did not let pigment from their fingers for the man.  
Diego weakened to trust but refused  
to remove Lenin’s face from life.  
Rockefeller paid Diego off, ordered the finished tropic  
smashed.* This, the vice president of this country;  
and in the other country, the president allows people  
shot in the streets who are unhappy they cannot belong  
to the living. The poor. There is evidence  
they are everywhere. In Diego’s murals, beside
Rockefeller's face painted in in the mural Diego repainted in his own country— the mural Rockefeller "murdered" by remote control in this country. The poor. Rockefeller, there is evidence—.

"Holocaust in Rockefeller Center," an account of Rockefeller's destruction of Rivera's mural is in the painter's autobiography, *My Art, My Life*
RAPID-TRANZITLAND

The snake running beneath the Bay
is sacred,
for it saves money & time
& gas & oil;
and when they drill
for offshore oil
and accidently hit
the ruptured end of it,
they will say they have found
the Loch Ness monster,
black as struck oil.
It left its lake in Scotland
by commuter tunnel joining
Laplanders to Piccadilly Square
in the flash of time
flick of tongue
takes.
The Loch Ness monster,
tired of electric shocks
sent down to find it,
decides to migrate
to the Bay beside the City,
courts the two bridges
and could not make up its mind
which is more beautiful.
Both lady bridges
died in the earthquake,
but the Loch Ness monster
now lives in the sky
overlooking Quintana Roo.
Californians always were quirky
and believed anything
before anyone else
knew it was true.
They've renamed the monster
"Quetzalcoatl"
because he's half snake.
The snake flies
in their sky.
How else could it be up there
if it didn't have feathers?
And so, Californians
worship Quetzalcoatl
to reassure themselves
they're there
and to keep Quetzalcoatl on high,
which Quetzalcoatl
is happy to do.
His tail regrew,
and they don't need any subways
in their submarine place.
They simply float about
the sunken gardens
of ex-supremacy.
Back on land,
people of other states
still imitate the fallen place,
have a highly developed
rapid transit system,
and dump all the cars
in the sea.
That's where Quetzalcoatl,
son of Kukulcán,
serves the people of Quintana Roo.
In his godly way
he shoves scrapped cars
aside. Soon
they form an island of rust.
Once a year, Yucatanecks
slow-motion over to its base
and praise the feathered serpent
for piling those cars up
so perfectly
they will not fall over.
Select Yucatanecks
climb the pyramid of cars,
and as they reach the top,
their heads lift out of water.
They die there
in sacrifice
to the coming year of cars,
for their lungs
have adapted to water.
No Californian lives
without a gill.
The survivors of the quake
started out with snorkels,
but Quetzalcoatl taught them
the joys of inhaling water.
Someday the pyramid
will become too high,
and unless Quetzalcoatl
makes the heap of scrap iron
lean another way,
Quintana Roo will be crushed
under auto metal.
Californians live
as best and well they can
under precarious burden
of cast-off cars
by their side—
the very cars
their ancestors
built and sold
beyond belief.
Most acts in the past
were done
in the name of Avalanche
who inhabits
the land above sea.
It was her footsteps
made the thunder
that made California break off.
Avalanche laid eggs called
nuclear power plants.
The first one hatched
in a puff
that made the earth
open up.
Out of Avalanche—
Avarice, son of Avalanche,
brought an end to California.
That is how
the Loch Ness monster
lost its tail and became
pie in the sky for
brine-laden people
set among seasquid mist
and hoarfrost fish,
who call themselves
Yucatanecks
and founded their first city
called Quintana Roo
where Avarice
could not reach them
but affects them nonetheless.
Leakage from other eggs
seeps into the water;
soon water will be
deathly to breathe.
Even Quetzalcoatl will die.
Then the ex-Californians
will move on.
That is why
they’re building spaceships,
imagine signs in the sky
from Kukulcán,
father of Quetzalcoatl.
No use sending Quetzalcoatl
to fight Avarice.
The latter’s seeds
are already planted.
His destruction will be fertile
a million years.
So the Yucatanecks
live for every minute
ticking away undersea,
worshipping the serpent,
and worrying about
the junkpile next door.
Next thing they knew,
inhabitants of Nevada
were throwing commuter cars
onto the pile of cars,
replacing them
with something faster
and more expensive.
Or had the people above
gone back to the land
to live simple
like the Californians
of Quintana Roo?
All in all,
it is all long hope
in a little while,
for they say Earth
will return to the serpents—
children of Avarice
and Avalanche.
But first,
that pyramid of American autos
and commuter cars
will topple,
creating a tidal wave
at Nevada;
and everyone will say
it's because of Howard Hughes,
Nevada landed next to California,
replaced its casinos
with caryatids,
 eked out a living
on a limestone bed,
grew crude rope
and drank from a barbed plant—
ecstacies of which
husbands
of tequila widows knew.
Nevadans' lungs
soon converted
to gill living.
They saw their wrongs
and cleaned their houses
and changed their clothes
four times a day—
and wore pure white.
Beside Yucatan ecks,
Mayans lived and shared,
grew wise,
and worshipped the ex-
Loch Ness monster overhead.
A new pyramid was started
beside them
made of bodies of those
who had succumbed to
nuclear power leakage.
And they took Howard Hughes
to the summit
and impaled him there.
Others they took up:
Liz Taylor,
who was visiting Nixon
when the tidalwave came;
those bad golfers
Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope,
Sammy Davis, Gerald Ford.
They rendered their fat
for use in lamps under sea
to remind people
of the end of Avarice.
& tho that beast
yet roams the land
above the sea,
the creature
is yearly
diminished,
thank Quetzalcoatl.
    Quickly now, people
catching on faster
than streamlined trains
of the Bay, make
history into poetry.
Say it in the signs
over the straps
of the fast riders.
    Gerald Ford
said we could learn
from Red China.
    Learn from your
Mexican brothers and sisters:
give the government
of the people,
the oil. Give Rockefeller
social security;
he's 66.
    Thoughts finally arrive
at realization
that furtherance
of Bigfathers
was fate of all our effort.
Greed is no more innate in us,
Diane Wakoski, than war—
though the seeds of it
are well into the land,
now that they are
in the soil.
    O Quetzalcoatl,
    let us live out our days
without Avarice visible.
Keep the slow creeping thing
at its lowliest.
Taking pictures of a copy of a fresco
from a palace unearthed in the late 1950's
formerly covered by a bean field
near the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon,
I am suddenly surrounded by people.
Their English-speaking guide instructs me:
"Move aside," for they have paid to have her
take them through, and I'm not to join them.
I hear her say, "Here is a painting
of the rain god, Tlaloc.
See the lovely flower in each of his hands
with raindrops dripping out."
Lady, those flowers are not flowers,
but hearts,
and that is not water
dripping out.
Caracol*

Let us build
a pyramid spreading
ray in this country's city
see if there won't be a run on pyramids
Not a volunteer pyramid not a slave pyramid
Not a paid one but a soul pyramid a true pyramid
good as Chicoac Think what we would learn from
Egyptians' triangles in the sky Pyramids of Egypt
upon us Let's make it Mexican style a little uneven
a little medieval Mayans had their high while Europe
had its lights off Mayans stayed in the sun polished
it up every night How they dreaded to let love out of
sight We don't have to prove we have hearts It's in
there bumping City of Solid Poem let us build a pyramid
of seven tiers and call it "Where the Magician Lives" Make
the mountain hollow and call it "Beloved Hunchback" Put a comb
of jewels on top called "Lascivious Moongoddess" Let us have a
step for every book read and a falling off place every day Lay
snow across for the Hermit Let the blond sunpowered Fool be me
Let the sun over the edge let stone cut it into a living thing
Look up at the light and say Light I love you Love Let sun light
cities spreading ardor round this town Look out our foreheads'
temples' windows at all the heart around Keep the observatory so
open anyone can be alone with a lens system of trees each leaf
make a tiny print on earth of bird Windmills churning the Mexico
of our souls Old wells stirring bones of those who died for no
Colorwheels of aureoles evince the mind's Rosetta In colororgan wind
let us build the invisible every layer nearer let us build a pyramid Begin

*To read the poem, find a stone that "feels right"—large
enough to just fit the hand At the poem's conclusion
the stone is to be lifted in one hand into the air and let
down just hard enough to make the floor or ground at the
site of "Caracol" sound—but not hard enough to do damage
Leave the stone where you placed it
LOVE IS A TEMPLE OF TURTLES

Pull a lock-o'-blond hair in Mexico for luck;
what luck, free-to-care poet on a trip
should love a starling.
Wish well, April of Mayans
setting fields to their fires.
Are Mayans not birds going about business?
All of us leak albumen; everyone eats eggs
as starlings nip suet from feeders.
I well wish bird suck monthly egg I drop.
Luck-o'-love poet after intense naturalness:
Blackhaired starling, dart center of intent;
iridescent darling, needle through to sun.
Sky smoulders color of starlings' innate
smokiness.

Birds up north agitate a mating,
tamp cotton nap and nest straws
while Mayans set brush fires
to make the stone turtles of Uxmal sweat.
Call naturalness of intensity "luck"
and sweat of immobile turtles "tears."
Tears are rain, iridescent and sudden
as shadows over turtle eggs, some taken.
Care-to-free Easter here,
children out seeking colors in the grass;
Dangerbird, put thy lips to my beak and draw
in eggshell sky of that turtle of temples.

Love, O love's carapace rainbow—
forever falling upward deck-o'. T a
The Calmecac*

*Esoteric college for Aztecs.
ILLUMINATI

For Charles Olson & “Lady Poets”

You put Robert Duncan in deerskin;
I put him on a pyramid.
In the Mexico of Imagination
a pyramid is a ship,

and Robert, Argonaut;
and gentle man Jess
works feathers together,
feathers worked in serpent.

In the Temple of the Jaguars
castled Jess
stuffing all Victorianism up there
—affixing in the innerstairs—

until it mingles
with Mayan wraparounds.
Robert on expeditions of poesy,
brings home to El Castillo

the Victrola Mayan explorer
Sylvanus Griswold Morley
gave Indians at Tulum-Over-
looking-the-Sea, a kind of talking
cross, settling things.
The broken needle now is missing
on the ancient record player
Morley wound up at night

down at the ballcourt where
once Mayans played
for their dear skins.
Always moon turns skin
of pyramids white, each stone,
corporeal. Cellscape.
Stars of Yucatan tweaked
by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart,

Sibelius forest outpourings
of the cone of the player.
(Germans and Mayans didn't meet
between World Wars, did they?)

Sun battened in branches,
Morley spins around, claps madly
at each running-down classic
buffeting flintsharp stairs

where blood had lain. Loneliness
amplified by bone acoustics
of a three-sided court,
so absence of players and ball

at Chichén Itzá is heard
by everyone sitting watching
the hurricane jungle
coming over stone.
Chapter I: Robert and Jess play Kipling
upon the crank phonograph
(hear
within—
the jade-eyed jaguar’s
“muh-muh-muh”),
rally to episodes of
gentle men.

Chapter II: “Muh-muh-muh”—
the true sound
of a jaguar sailing
jungle skiff.

Chapter III: “Muh-muh-muh” means the reason
the widemouth snake
does not close its jaws
to the hurricane jungle
heading straight for
the hole for the ball
is stone, I swear, is alive.

Chapter IV: Not only the vines:
some vines are extra alive.

Chapter V: Why I would not be me
surrounded by serpents
swinging in trees.

Chapter VI: Howits gotit name
is why the critic
called Mayan art:
“Unthinkable,”
“smothering,,”
“abysmal,”
“plethora,”
“glut.”

Chapter VII: “Muh-muh-muh”
means the reason is stone
as is the ring of the hole
as was the ball
is why the widemouth snake
does not shut its jaws
at leeward headway sunword
leading sunway headwood leaning
sunward heading jungle.
Chapter IX: How wits got named.
Chapter X,
Chapter XI,
Chapter XII,
Chapter XIII: XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX.
The authoress let out a sigh.
She put her pen down,
climbed into her hammock
with her fabulous flying dog and
traveling companion, the Colonel,
and did not breathe before she
started the night's book: POK-A-TOK:
How Mayan Basketball Got Named
"Lipsmack-Glottalstop-Tongueclick."

*Follow the poem by making these three sounds
three times in a row (like the sound of a ball
on a wall)
SACRED CENOTE

Mayas and Toltecs
mated in preordination,
begot what kind of child?
If god was as large as the penis
sticking out of the ground
at Uxmal, and wife alive
for sacrifice—
one for the well?
Me-too for the well;
and baby makes three:
commodities.
Human potential
is as the gold
people wore.
Over the edge.

A Maddening Tail

none
on either
bodied
snake
mirrored tooth
to tooth

single
THE GREAT FEATHERED SERPENT IS DEAD

God lies all around
on the ground at Chichén Itzá.
O in parts. The work of evil hands.
Evil won out at Chichén Itzá.

Drum,
beat out captured fragments
from the Maya:

... evil man
    ... battle master
    ... seize land

O at Chichén Itzá

godlessness was . . .

... recall

the song . . .

God lies all around on the ground
at Chichén Itzá. O in parts.
The work of evil hands. Evil won out
at Chichén Itzá.
GOD-CHOPPED-UP-BY-POACHERS

God, save me from poems that enwrap me.
May the poems I write enrapt others.
May all I write unwrap me,
hold together,
remain.
At Blackmountain "the idea, outlived the college."  
—Robert Duncan

Mayan Initiation

Noses like mountains  
tending pyramid-shaped  
sails of Burningwater College

Behavior Modification

Noses like mountains  
made in the image of  
pyramid-shaped sails  
of Burningwater College

Teaching Assistant

Wiping noses like mountains  
made in the image of  
pyramid-shaped sails  
of Burningwater College  
that tend Burningwater College's  
pyramid-shaped sails

Assailing

Makes godstudent Yipes  
turn all colored degrees  
of the college of feathers
LORD OF LEARNING

Invisible
Lord of the Smoking Mirror.

Blacktrack of his foot
prints on all things

create
the matter-clouded mirror

that obliterate
learning.

Lord of the Smoking Mirror.
Invisible.

FINISHING SCHOOL

Flowering shinbones,
smoking mirrors,
burning water,
blossoming war:
not contradictions
but literal ordinances.

A hurricane was not
why Mayans abandoned
institutions,
but institutions'
lovable, rattly dependence
on the figurative
AS TECH

Montezuma thought Cortez was a Great Educator come to teach.

Cortez did teach.

CORTEZ UPHOLSTERERS

Naming an establishment "Cortez" is bad news, but good business lived up to.
"SUNDAY DREAM AT THE ALAMEDA PARK"

At 2:30 a.m. attendants at the desk of Hotel Del Prado turn the lights off on your mural, Diego Rivera.
It is then your mural takes a walk in the dark as I did, my first night in Mexico City—across Juarez Avenue to the park of your youth in your mural, where the black-with-sunlight skull lady holds your hand, Diego—boy with a frog in your pocket. In nearby history, incinerators of the church spewed ashes of the persecuted over the well-to-do neighborhood—most putrescent stench of those who had been flogged beneath canary-colored trees, or sinners hung by saints on mossy Turn-of-Century trees, where you strolled with Lady Death, her lipstick painted ear to ear, her loss of ears covered over with magnolias. She in her feathered serpent boa, grinning magnificence at haberdashing Spaniards tipping top hats and bowlers at her ganglia of lace. THE GREAT FEATHERED SERPENT IS DEAD. In the park tonight, I see semblance to Montezuma and overkilled heritage. Everything is enlarged. Balloon bouquets go higher than the whimsy trees. The balloon man wants free. Swollen kernels of overcooked cobs of corn too long on the stalk—tortillas, by grease a dog could hardly move its bones toward. Sweet vendors of sweat rush braziers of live coals trailing sparks over clothing, tipping wagons toward intuited sales. Children point to this plaza of fainting trees as the Boulevard of Miracles. The child pulls the arm to stop the car at the Boulevard of Miracles. See Santa in sanguine suit accompanied by kings in cheesecloth robes of ruins. Their outfits pyramid around them, become the Magi of the night, lift the child off the parents’ arms. Parents pay to catch the child of their picture before a backdrop of torn boxes of toys and bright colors of nothing for no one. Smile, child, at the delirium tremens photographer with ancient folds, pops an instant polaroid, holds it cold under a gas lamp to hurry the fast-developing child of the night before the family makes off with captured air and legacy of empty presents. And every six feet, another Santa, another Magi vie for the child’s eye.
A dirt-faced five-year-old carrying a smudged baby, and a marked three-year-old grasping the older girl grabbing the baby, and baby gripping both. They all hold each other, this ragamuffin infant trio. No big person to bend night back from these tender plants. They root your attention like spring water you want to run your soul through. What was the task of toddlers wending their way in the windy black, past my bedtime? The inability to breathe slipped into everyone's sleep. Lovers twine together on iron benches, soak up the serpentine night. Kiss interrupted by Hopelessness trying to sell them Chiclet gum. Diego, how would you paint jaundiced eye of the moon emplaced on factory valley yellow branches? As centavo of a dancing corpse to the tune of a man making a guitar-finger living while the nearest movie house plays "Madly." Under direction of the years ago manager of the Hotel Del Prado, students scratched your face out of the painting, Diego—and the slogan: "God Does Not Exist." You restored your face and the words; and for years, the hotel covered your mural up where it was in the dining room. The meals went on beneath the boarded-up dream. People are the natural product of everyplace. Your mural came back nightly in the morning: Our Lady Death in her someday best, holding your hand in Alameda Park. It is there, Diego, where my ignorance attempted to cross: cars hit at cars, birds are gone, streets guarded. Emphysema of dreams, this is not your heart, Mexico, Alameda of dreams, Diego, of your youth. A country's history holds hands with itself of a Sunday of what is now a waterless well whetted by sprinklers in a skyless canyon where children cry, "Miracles, miracles, Boulevard of Miracles!" And nightly in the morning, attendants turn the lights back on Mexico's frog prince, this glitter block, still winsome trees, oil eyed sky without a star, reminds of bone nighttrees, lung flour and gassed petals, pyramids covered with cement company mixings. It snows the snow of always in Mexico City. Snowing outside in Seattle, I sit in the windy heights
of history, keeping memory simple, not knowing enough; but I know enough of the feel of that night I strolled where Lady Death led the procession out of the picture and my eye.

VISION

Pollen on the road to ruins,
Faces' golden futures of joy,
Love-paved closeness for joy,
Futures of joy for closeness.
Constructs of love. Hard-to-take
Close-ups not taken. Remains of gold.
Gold reminds. On the way to pyramids—
Families of gold GLORY ON THE MORNING VINE.
Light-poised, obliterated, I put my camera down.
Return to
The Lost Land
of
Quintana Roo
TEMPLE

You came to me in a dream by you—
you had a pyramid in the middle of your chest.
That single-centered orb
    had the power
    of a third eye.
When I lay by you—there were two.
I wondered where the third went.
In dream you came by me—
I kissed your pyramids and observatories;
  sequestered,
encapsulated in the sweetest chamber
ever orbited.
THE BONEBODY JUNGLE

A poet must eat
a dog and a cat.
Aztecs ate themselves:
how they disappeared.

Quicksilver cat
squeezes in and out of
the apartment
like a thermometer drop.

The dog narrows
at squirrels in the park.
What good is a squirrel?
If you can't catch

'em, you can't eat.
What to do—
cook a dog and a cat?—
the cat's endless belly
and the dog with pet worm
that eats half the food.
Hunger has made its home
in my heart.

Feel its feather duster
shoving furniture-lack
around in there.
It goes up and down

my body like a tree.
Monstrous rodent
hoarding hard lumps
in my heart—

not fit food
for dog and cat and poet
to sink in our teeth.
The squirrel's
not doing well
in a winter
that's already autumn,
but works away.

Body hints
at graveyard.
The poet's bonejungle
body articulates

how little
separates us
from animals
gnawing a hand.
TEMPLE OF THE DWARF

Bought a mop from a blindman
for twice as much as in the store.
He looked so straight
and tapped so tall
I bought
the finest mop.
Crumbs glommed to it
in the dark. It meant
good luck like when
I bought my Mayan hat
from the hunchback in Merida.
A string went around
so any hat
fit every head.

The man who walks
head higher than his eyes
better be blind
or it won't come true.
What a wish
is privilege
to play with here—
to believe a hunchback
good luck, make
double sanctity
out of the both
crippled and blind.

The hunchback,
the one with more than luck,
)sells many hats,
he's well-to-do.
Would you trade
the blindman's height,
strands of mop
borne erect at his shoulder
for straw of hunchback's hat—
the role of Munchkin
in an Aztec movie—
the distinction
of having a pyramid
named after you?
CHICANOMACHO

Don't
  treat me
like that woman
  going about claiming
she's direct descendent to
Montezuma and Cortez. Don't

point your penis at me because
Cortez cheated on Montezuma,
  resulting in a quickie-
divorce. The world
  is bellyful
up.

53
IN LAND OF LIVID CHILIES

The Mexican government will not repair the ten-foot penis sticking out of the ground at Uxmal because it is an embarrassment to the Land of Walking Penises.
RITUAL

They made the sacrificial victim
wear wings wings drooping

further and further

the higher he climbed.

A great featherweight.
To touch ground meant "all free!"
AT UXMAL THEY ARE

Rebuilding a pyramid
one block at a time  carried up on
the head of a stonesturdy Indian.
While he goes up,
his double comes down;
both heads busy with
when day is done.
Neither looks down nor up;
stepsaws by heart.
60 lb. blocks on their heads
give them bearing of priests
burdened with feathers.
Where impositions pivot,
they move their
millstone skulls
in pillar state.
Their necks serve
as altars for the brain. Sweet
beehive brain's forced dormancy.
Circumstance balancing on the
ball of foot. Civilizations
opening in their sleep.
ADULT EDUCATION

I couldn't take a class in self-defense for women because I couldn't bend over and touch my knees. Class was held in a gym where sweat reminded me of standing in the shower with my clothes on, the water running (because a shower was compulsory) but never touching. (I didn't want anyone to see my barely breasts.) C for attendance and deceiving P.E. teachers with suspect cropped hair. I couldn't take beginning Spanish because it was held in an ex-high school building with green walls, and the teacher made me know I knew I was slowest. F for not attending. F stands for Fine-with-me. I already have bachelors, masters, and 3rd degrees. When I teach English, the only lack of freedom will be no caciques* in class. "Cacique" does not mean "no army pants for women." In Spanish, a cacique is a ruler. It's not that he knows too much. In English in my class, a cacique is a man who dominates conversation and other things. What if a woman dominates the conversation? An A for favoritism.

*In this poem "cacique" is to be pronounced "khaki"
MAYAN LOVE

Squeezed dry,
you told me
in your way
you loved me.

(ACCESS to the body royal,
rivertide slakes bitter.)

How could I love
an utterly
udderless lemon
in a falsie onion way.

(Don't want your money, Honey,
It's not a Mayan's way.)
IF YOU SEE FAYE KICKNOSWAY, TELL HER

Where I go, poetry goes. You can't tell me
Mayans are not so exotic as to be extinct.
I have to make up their kingdom to go with it.
I mean, how to carry on exotic sorties with
enemies of Mayans if they're not known?

I'm mean. Where I go, poetry goes.
Into the forest, body crouched in encroachment
where woodhairs spit rainbows back at the frog
of my croaking sores and victory happens
in certain light and only in California.

On the other side, you miss everything so
busy swipin' at me with those duodenal eyes
and pointed nostrils sniffing out the viable,
capitulating symphonies at every wipe. In false
wound, I play dead in the blood of my rainbow.

Whistling Cesar Franck from fortifications
of airmade suspicions, my watchtowers are a
cacophony of imagined forays into enemy camp:
sneakin' out the back, lookin' over shoulder;
their swords like a bundle afire on my back.

Clouds over head are boulders' testimony
of my defeat. They'll be stampin' among
intaglio in their tents tonight, snortin' dust,
fingerin' exotic instruments while I imagine
offenses, swoon on paradox. The Happy Martyr.

Do not tell me imagination is not exotic and
does not exist. When I create love so esoteric
you can't see it—give her my name.
Where I go, poetry goes. 'Tis my name's sake.
When I wee, poetry tinkles, whole toilets mate

in orchestration complicated as Mayan counting—
and as treacherous—and as real, among you,
Hundrums 'n Dreamers. Where I go,
poetry swells of piss n' vinegar. Dingbell
aura of yellow sounding bullfume out de pores.
Where I go and when I go, poetry perspires
like hiccuping green wristwasts of a non-smiling
Swede with her wild Mayan goose drives 'em
nonexistent into the city of the moment of the
Mayans. In a certain only California light.

Signed,

Suit o' Swords

I BELIEVE IN MAYANS

I believe Mayans had flying saucers shaped like waffles They did
go them from Martians They went by pyramid If you stand or
in or on one of those things you fly 'Temples' observatory entities
are wings of eyescurrying parsleystar jungle Triangular-shaped spo-
like matches lighting themselves on the sky Like Jess: Mayans had
spatulas packing the sky until it was solid I believe in solution
One of the Beetles' images about sky-in-the-pie is an ancient song
Johnny Raye the deaf singer: "I Believe" Like Robert Duncan's out-
space attack on the evil atomic scientist (What other kind is there?
Old Hack the wicket scientist killed the heavens but lost the sta-
A good night is when Robert went to the blackboard nobody noticed
essence scintillating dimensionality and impact of eternity Belief
in shape of hard-to-digest arrows aimed in faith is not half as
functional or scientific as Mayans flying excited saucers
AZTEC SATURDAY IN GOLDEN GATE PARK

Happiness is sitting in the sun on a park bench. I'm honored some black women sit down beside me talking about putting gumbo in a plastic bag. They start to talk to me while a spider trembles on the edge of a page I'm on about Aztec ritual.

One woman is from Louisiana: Baton Rouge. "My father grew up fifty miles from there." "Really?"
A white man comes along with a Great Dane that gets in a fight with a great Irish setter. My dog gets in it too, little lump in the clay. We crash from the bench. Snapping, snarl-entwined furies spread us apart. The woman

with the red dog has a chain, is able to pull him away. I re-leash my dog. You would think the man would take hold of the choke collar of the Great Dane, but he wants to show how well he can control his dog with his voice. They dash away—gone. Happiness settles back on the bench, but it's not the same. The spider's vanished or smashed. The man

with the Dane jogs around in a giant circle; which means he comes right back to us with his monster when he didn't have to. I hold my dog and shout at the man, "Arrogant, aren't you!"
He smiles and shouts something I don't hear. He names me "Babe." Then is he gone for good?

If I could only have said it then, I would've: "Without a big dog, how big would you be?"
The women and I share our disgust of the enemy who has shot us with adrenalin and wrecked parkbench comfort of sun benchwarmers want. Even a Great Dane is a victim of such men who use their dogs for their penises. A Dane
is a great animal—as any animal is—and should be allowed to remain. A great place for Danes is in the country—country cousins instead of city enemies of my dog who had a hard time adjusting to letting out his little shits on cement. The place for such men is beyond my vocabulary. Persians built a city for murderers, walled them in together, facing themselves in everyone around. I go back to Aztecs with savage heart.
A MAYAN IS A KIND OF OFFICE WORKER

Mayans have entered the City of the Moles through a mousehole in the side of stone and are reassembling the possession of parades of movies of sundown over our eyes.

Background bakes; sun sinks in. A writer is an office worker, under ground. A Mayan is a kind of chocolate butterfly you won't like. The brain is the best organ music in town.

When the Mayan goes looking for her heart—thought, imagination, ideas see out from cinemas of love against corduroys of clerks. Mayan Walt Whitman hung up his strange shoulder alongside brains' folded bumbleshoots. Mayan writings of Paul Goodman, Susan Sontag, Hannah Arendt, Bertrand Russell, I.F. Stone are world alive. (How did they live their lives?)

Keystone of the shoulderblade is a working head. Why is wisdom Mayan? A Mayan stays sane by interpreting Moles in terms of Mayans, by being Mayan all the time.

A Mole remains an office worker. A Mayan is a kind of chocolate butterfly savored to the taste of writings on the tongue: why wisdom is Mayan. The sexiest organ of the body is the brain.
THE MAYAN STREETCAR

In San Francisco
the streetcar
with letter X on it
is the Mayan streetcar.
It only picks up Mayans
and an occasional Aztec
from Los Angeles.
See them skimming
the tracks of Market Street
with sacrificial instruments,
all that zigzag of color,
pulled-back hair,
and eyes the insides of
bottomless wells;
double-vision peering
out at tripling buildings;
remarking to each other
in chocolate language
concerning strange going-ons
out there in space.
X is the only streetcar
in town that doesn’t
give transfers.
No one gets out
at corners.
A Spanish priest
once accidently
boarded the Mayan streetcar
and was tossed off
with his stomach
on a cord
bouncing behind.
Perched atop the stomach
was a hooked-beak bird
with the insignia
of enlightenment
hanging from its neck.
Don’t ever get on
the X streetcar—
they are riding
to the end of the line.
LAND OF LONGTIME-NO-RAIN

Part I  The Other

Mayans
have landed in San Francisco.
Bubbles from rain
skim down the alley

plastic spaceships
slide along.
No miniature people
pop out.

Mayans know
not to step out
in mind-dabbling
play of sequined rain.

Come out, Mayans, come out
of your cloesty
spaceships, enter
bejeweled ruin,

your Japanese
cameras flashing
at a native
in silvery sunshades:

close-up
of a mouthful
of pointy teeth;
the flighty creature

shows you
her motorcycle.
She bats her eyes.
You go for a ride.

Wind capes up.
Something you have never
seen before
wings away in her eyes.
Smitten,
you escape to a tavern
where fake
angelmusic’s playing.

*Lynn, this is not
the only that is all.
Do not lose
sight of sound of rainfall

at the edge of
epicanthus.
Pattering
sewing machine

operated by
a blackhaired woman
related to Mayans,
right now in Chinatown.

A sound
drowned out
by other
sewing machines.

Rain
neither seen nor heard;
only felt,
walked out into.

Weary trek
on bent legs
to a little living space.
Peel back a Mayan

and what do you have
but a blackhaired woman
who is hurting
all her life.
Part II  Suggestion from
           Outer Space

What
the blackhaired woman
and the glimmering
sunlit fairy array

(count me in)
and the Mayans,
and all others
of us whose money

is going away
and not coming back—
could do
is STOP.

WORK.
LIKE.
WOMEN.
DID.

ONE.DAY.IN.FIN.LAND.
glimpse OUR STRENGTH
as it lands
in San Francisco.

Let them call us
vampires.
Demanding
of appetite.

Part III  How the Book
          of Women Began

A stranger
turned to
the Swedish Mayan
and said,
“I see
a female bible
by your side.”
“Yes. The only thing
missing
is tenderness.
Tell me of tenderness,”
the Mayan said
to the fey stranger.
Alike as Martians,
the stranger
could not
and continued
carrying in her
scared jeans
the migrant dream
of belonging.
The Mayan kept
asking everyone
of tenderness..

It grew in fragments
on the page
inside the eyelids
of transient eyes.

The scared woman
found out
she could write,
and the word

got around:
there was

tenderness...

And they spent
their lives revising
new, improved
female bibles.
Written one year later:

THE BOOK OF WOMEN

(After reading Susan Griffin's *Women and Nature*)
THE POPOL VUH; Sacred Book of the Mayas*

The poet waited a year.

It did not rain.

to know a woman

from another place

It did not rain.

of the sun.

Forty years not knowing she was learning

to edge

the curved earth

of her fingertips—

the bowl-juggling,

melody-woman waited (there were two)

with her scraper to scour the well

The other woman made a drawing

of lightning in clay,

It did not rain.

(There were three.) the slow tuning

of another's trails, if they could,
squeak like earthworms

loop through

ground, move curds, make the hanging

silence

pourous.
The lips of the soil, if they could,
open

the day it did not rain.

(There were four.) Dry bundles knot

in slowly creatures' systems.

It did not rain.

There were many
with dry mouths,
    recite, blind
(there are many),
    if they could:
"There are no women in this
sacred book in my hand
but who hoist the burden of sunlight
like straw on their backs,
about to ignite."
    )Men must become them.(

Chant,
    say in unison, "Like an earthquake
about to make a world,"
    whisper, "I am

become displaced."

The
    slow
turning
of
    another's
    tales.

"The deliverer of The Popol Vuh is to wear this
poem in front of her face, supported by some kind
of elaborate headgear and not so close that her
eyes cross, and she is to imitate the curve of
parenthesis marks simultaneously (with right and
left hands—hands raised at either side of the
height of the poem) at places where they occur in her
reading of it"
HISTORY OF WOMEN IN 25 MAYAN WORDS OR LESS

Object
Ornament
Artifact
Digging
Kneeling
 Grinding
Hurting
Together
Huddling
Hubbub
Giggling
holding water on their heads,
sling-draped foreheads holding
more of it, elbows holding bowls,
close, compact, centering,
Gathering
Searching
Bursting
Blooming
Learning
Luminous
Illuminated
Breaking
Changing
Making
Celebrating
Raining

Recorded in San Francisco’s Chronicle: as I finish this the 28th and last day of February, 1977, at 7:55 a.m., it started to rain.
MIME

I am the invisible conversationalist,
a female Pepe
with the Cantinflas face
who falls foolishly deliciously
in love with you.

Foolfunny crumbs on my face,
eyes colliding with
the pie of love,
the meringue look of Charlie Chaplin,
I clasp my cookie heart and can't talk.
PORTRAIT OF FRIDA KAHLO

A schoolgirl,
she taunted
Diego Rivera
scaling the skeleton
lumber scaffolding
of vision.
She poured
water on stairs
so he'd slip;
he was too heavy
to fall.
She would not
take her eyes off
him as his mistress
glowered at her
as he painted
"Creation."
Newly wed, she dreamed
goodbyes to her family.
Years she was
on her way to
the City of the World
as she called it—
San Francisco;
got there
with him.

A woman, she stood
in front of him,
shielded him
from four assassins
so astonished they
could not shoot
nor move
her.
She nearly died
of many miscarriages;
her pelvis
fractured,
hers uterus severed
in a traffic
accident.
She was determined
to have a baby
by Diego Rivera.
A painter, her body
felt
in a million pieces.
This is a tribute
to an unfrayed woman.
This is her painting:
FRIDA KAHLO
WAS NOT AFRAID.
BLUE IS THE COLOR OF SACRIFICE

All my life I have been a beginning painter.
I see red.
What to do with it?
I am awkward;
I don't make it good.
It keeps turning blue.
Certain men you say make you see red redder.
Our sight tempered
by our different lives as an artist.
You turned the color of feelings, painter,
into words.
And I agree with you:
red is a favorite color
when we both see blue.
Anger is an art
women are working on,
to name the painting red
but know it is men.
Such combinations
do not cancel themselves.
Sacrifice and rage
are peculiarly together.

The end pages of my new book
are purple.
Among Mayans old
as limestone,
purple meant zero;
meaning, my book speaks
of old days when
hermaphrodites abounded
and red and blue made black.
To paint the right picture
takes all my life.
I am a beginning painter
who wants to be a real painter:
Mary Ann Hayden who
on March 2, 1977, let people know
she did not like typing misogynist words,
but had to, to work.
Write the spreading
dye of the purple mollusk's
death.
Tell of invisible hermaphrodites
and women,
rainbows lilting from their lips.
WATER

We watched a movie of Mayans waiting for water
while liquids rain in us in touch with the sun.
Men going out and not returning while we swallowed
our popcorn. Women and children brushing against fire,
eyelids roasting like pages of holy book, and our eyes
puffed and our cheeks dried. Leaders huddled with oracle.
He consulted the inside of a dried-up rabbit, couldn't
tell a thing. Nuggets of corn stuck in our teeth.
They said it was the one that must be gotten rid of—
that wasn't the charm; they killed many that wasn't
the one. We say it is sunspots forcing hundred mile
fireballs up in Azores; sinuses' dry canyons,
saliva receding, tongue stuck out in salt. Speech kaput.

Joints rasped, muscles clamored, eyes screaming in
their sockets, blood peaked at the nostril. I fell asleep
from this dream. A sleeve nudged: the promised rain.
The magic man took his own heart out of himself; it lied.
It didn't happen, the man they thought wise. Hard life
it came, montage the rain in banks in hail in drain;
dozzled fires, drove dirt down gulleys of gladness
heaped up in tear-caked rivulets. We women watched rain
all through the theater, felt discomfort. Popped corn
dropped on the floor. We rose, relieved it wasn't us
walking out under a cinema sky overlooking something unreal
unbroken night after night, stars like kernels of corn
opening up in a glowing everdark field, unending of blue.
THE AVON LADY STRAIGHTENS HER FACE
FROM AGING OF SPANISH ACCENT

Grandmother of the sun,
beanshaker carver       of green stones       jeweler engraver
sculptor wrapt          cabinetmaker           she who fashions
green or beautiful plates, she who makes green vases or gourds
powdered smells         scent                 Ms. Smith who fashions silver
with a hammer            her mouth and eyes     worn of wood
Rainface                 cornshaker sunrise     grainshaker: sing:
completion
The woman of wood        glows                  obsidians
Sunperson
raps on objec
changes shape

The granddaughter of the dawn grown lately
her spiderweb skin tells of precious lines the sun placed there—
the windswept overhead,
the wisdom of that last woman
of a tribe being founded.
Thy reigning face of knowing!

80
THE MOMOL VUH

From
the first day of spring
on page 88 of The Momol Vuh
from pg. 88 of Delia Goetz
&
Sylvanius G. Morley's The Popol Vuh from the English from
the Spanish from the Latin from the Quiché. Into French.

Fragment

Languages-get-together women
of new-word-eliciting
gathering a thronging at the pipehole
of that first woman Dawn
She touched Gloria
and the applesky shone on them
Mixed they call to the others
in spreading light
they liven and name
Earth earth

Yesterday Swallows Today

Yesterday swallows
from Argentina
entered eaves
in a once-a-year language
of wings entering flutes.
Expectations
fluttertongue
a California town
dotted with swallows.
Nahuatl* words'
featherworking
entering under
Spanish tile.

*The Aztec language

81
HEART OF HEAVEN

Is the human heart
once removed
from itself.
Worn by women
best. and some men
lately more.
Stems and
pipes
and
pumps
and
blood
and
loving.most.
and caring.
tend. removed.
brought back
and thrives.
Mouth to mouth
ourselves.
Of molt.
and bone timbre.
HART CRANE, GHOSTING MEXICO

The heart is heard through the mind mute as bone columns of a red tide. Sunlight tipped pinkly through the creaming shell from which ideas unfurl, glistening forth as seaslugs’ colorations made exotic by slow Pacifics. Dear Heart, I hear you hot and cold Atlantis, fat clay figurines’ giant distant caryatids. At Tula pyramids miles inland, shells peek up under the slapping weight of wanting to know the heart passing through the brain in love. Wisdom cupped to ear, iceplants peaked to orange awaiting intellect to become present

company in the pleasure of the presence of mind; the presence of the pleasure of the ALL of the TIMELIVES’ RAIMENTS’ presence of a developing idea on a postcard from Isla Mujeres.*

Garment me in your sands O Isle of overweight

terracottas, im-

pregnate tourista by slow—currents of thoughts edging shores, sighting giant sea turtles scaling Quintana Roo’s luminous waters; where women are concerted to journey. Uncurl the deep—

the richly different soup of the mind creating . . .

*Isle of Women
OBSIDIAN WOMAN ON A GRAY HOUND

She looked like a chattering bird so hunched, so much the "little old lady," I hesitated to sit beside her; decided why not—am I ageist or something? She was reading a newspaper, didn't say anything. I spoke first. She answered she was going to Medford to her brother's, went on with the news, alert eyes behind glasses, perched on every bit of it, even the sports page.

She knew the migrant workers in Europe book I was reading of the oppressed in Switzerland. She pulled out Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* and read for as long as I read. When she started *Lysistrata*, I knew this was no little old lady. "Where you from?" "San Francisco." "I see you're reading *Aristophanes*. I did not expect to sit on the bus next to someone who likes literature."

"Yes, well, my husband is a scholar—just for fun. I'm not into it as much." "You must have had a college education." "No, I've always liked to read. My husband and I have marvelous arguments—for fun. I should say, 'we discuss'," she laughed—"and, if you could take only five books to an island, what would they be?" "Moby Dick," I floundered, "Emily Dickinson, Shakespeare, the Bible—Diane Wakoski."

Mark Twain was one she named; his cynical one banned all those years. We got off the bus at some place. I wandered toward the stores, heard this most loud whistle I didn't turn to see. There were fresh men on the bus—on the street? Wasn't me they were whistling at—hard-up smalltown men. I heard it again and turned to see the Grey Power woman whistling me back to the bus.
"Where did you learn to whistle like that?"
She stood uneven in her flower pattern dress, canary coat, bent-over back, shoes taking shape of her feet.
"When I was little. Isn't it great? I always wished I could whistle as loud as my brother through his teeth, but I had to use two fingers. I plant them to the sides of my mouth like this." She never talked much; she talked wisely.

I talked more. What she knew flowered from her like eagle flight. She was the perfect companion for me if she weren't married to a man who owned the perfect library. She said she wished she had worn her jeans and shirt, hadn't a dress on in a long time's bother. She went back to *Lysistrata*. I interrupted to tell her my fears about sitting next to a talkative person on the bus—

that I had informed a friend that morning that I wished I could reserve the seat beside me for an Aztec or a Mayan. She told me she had visited the Mayan exhibit at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair many times, and what she remembered best was obsidian; and that I didn't look forty years old—I looked twenty-five. And she asked me to tell her what I knew about Mayans—and oh my!
SISTER JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

For Frances Jaffer

Part I Colonial Mexico's Poetess Laureateess

Teach me to read; don't tell Mother. I will surprise her; I am three.

Mother won't dress me in schoolboy guise. Thank God for Grandfather's library!

I cut lock of my hair for every fact not learned, for I am a scholar not wanting beauty.
Beauty's in books;  
the bride of God's  
cell fills up with  
scientific experiments.

Lute, flute, easel,  
cookbook: married  
to the clutter of learning—  
they take these away.

Books are gone;  
I become sick  
from it. They bring  
my dear things back.

I settle arguments  
between nuns;  
interrupt study to  
word rhymes for church.

I wrote the Bishop  
to question  
that women not  
question men.

The Archbishop  
and all the superiors  
told me none of my  
mind's business.

I rid myself of books,  
my cell of instruments.  
To learn is a sin  
I sign in blood.

Never another book!
Part II  Mt Popocatépetl

To cross those ridges,  
create these passages  
is that lovely  
sister learning.  
"Sister" in Spanish  
is "Sor."  Sor Juana Inés.

As a child  
she could see  
one of Mexico’s  
highest mountains.  

Aged forty-three,  
our sore poet  
attended nuns  
suffering plague.  

A mountain symbolizes  
asexual learning.  
In Mexico,  
death is feminine.  

It is hard  
to pronounce  
an exploding mountain  
snows lie over  
like the buried learning  
of Our Sister of the Cross.

Part III  Tehuantepec  
and Beyond  

In Tehuantepec  
the women are taller  
and more handsome  
than the men.
OLD WAYS

Old ways
are no place
to begin. Liberation
is not Tehuantepec.

In wisdom a woman
puts her same
finger to the map,
and the place is new.
LADYLAND OWNERLORD
QUINCUNX

Symbol of move ≤ meant for women
who inherit land after their
husbands who owned maguey plantations
drink themselves to tequila deaths.

Drunk on cactus or female succulence,
leave Death behind, my darling,
ride with me into the new fold
of the maguey stalk.

Partly sad “tequila widows” with
lots-o'-change; protected plants
spread eternally green fire
from which spiny liquids drip.

Ride with me off guarded ranches
where once a spark of flower smiles out
an endless century and after your whole
system of barbed brilliance is given up.

Your salty wrist caught in time!
Bottle got a worm; the best,
my darling, fortunes twist.
Together fighting gladly free of twiny
fences and ropemade fleshly leaves.
Drunk on intelligence, ride with me,
my darling, into ensuing action
of the unfolding maguey’s

spike,) (labyrinthine

H e
Heart

of) (formation.
EAST OF THE AZTECS, WEST OF THE MAYAS

A Country Lies North in Shrouds

Know California is an island of black Amazons catching
conquistadors and feeding them to lion-footed sphinxes
with eagles' wings and women's heads that bite armor,
spit out bitterness like bullets, and pick their teeth
with the swords of conquerors. A 14th century Spaniard
no sooner wrote a book about it than many a conquistador
set out and disappeared.

Enough men
were kept on the island to keep the population going.
The base metal was gold. Gold bracelets, gold cages,
gold griffin collars. My gold car aimed onto gold
pavement out of estranged Los Angeles, fireballing down
gold vistas, foot on gold gas petal while gold radio
plays gold memories, "I Jus' Wanna Go Home."
The Woman Without a City

Egypt is Mexico, the golden-headed queen-o'-Californian
discovers mixed skin of cities' north star; gold city of
all skins, heart steers. San Francisco is only one stop
in a year's poetry set aside to learn Spanish. Sailing
out of the city of lost angels, she gives different
pronouncement to all that passes: words "musica poética"
zinging, tingle like gold promises on skysigns orient us:

| San Diego * | Salsa |
| Buena Park | Honda |
| Bolsa Ave. | Loyola |
| Los Alamitos | Sepulveda |
| Palo Verde Ave. | Marina del Rey |
| Santa Monica | Pacifica Hotel |
| San Gabriel River | Montana Ave. |
| Los Santos | Moraga Dr. |
| Los Cerritos | Ventura Blvd. |
| Atlantic Ave. | Sacramento |
| Alameda St. | Ventura |
| Santa Fe Ave. | Van Nuys |
| Pasadena | Reseda |
| Ford Granada | Panorama |
| Amerec | San Fernando |
| Pepe Lopez Tequila | Mission Hills |
| Dominguez Hills | Balboa Blvd. |
| San Pedros | Sylmar |
| Del Amo Fashion Square | Mojave |
| Gardena | Pico Canyon Rd. |
| Redondo Beach | Valencia Hospital |
| Hermosa Beach | Santa Paula |
| El Segundo | Val Verde Park |
| Olmeca the Head Tequila | Casa Royale |
| Gaetano Margarita & Daiquiri | Mission de Oro |
| La Cienega Blvd. | Cafe Jose |
| La Tijera Blvd. | Ft. Tejon Kampgrounds |
| Ronrico Rum | Palomas Wash |
| Las Vegas | San Francisco |

*Give the Spanish words Spanish pronunciation.
To name these, blood spilled over each. Years set aside
to learn a city's steps run red. To learn the world
in any language is to understand an explorer has no city.
To defuse power along camel-wedged years, she learns of
unions, multinationals, what work means, uses of women,
what servants means. To turn a mountain of devils around,
de-pyramid it, is journey essential, thought critical.
THE MAYAN TAPE RECORDER

for Roma

There is inscribed on my heart,
"Owned by Mayans, recorded by Mayans."

Metal is precious to work with
and takes a workmonth
to replace.

Soon, perhaps, metal
will be gone.
Mayans go so far

as to say a machine
is not a thing
but a person

with a name.
A tape recorder
is sacred,

resonates
earwaves' exchanges,
's an artifact

of our time, more than
a chip-off-the-old building.
I can hear futures'

"oohs," "ahhhs"*
over ancient jungles
of beetle transistors,

seasnail resistors,
solidstate hawks circling
o'er ruins,

*This line is whispered.
plastic cruciform discs
rotated into shape
of movement of
clouds sounding like
gliding pearly seagulls
at dawn slowed down.

To use it up overnight
is economist Veblen's
"conspicuous consumption."

Last night I dreamed
we waited for the story,
but the teller*

went into the woods
and did not return.
"The forward will not move."

Someday an archeologist
will find "Holy, holy, holy,"
on every heart

inscribed, that is gone.
"Holy, holy, holy,"
teethchant haunted waking
to the REALREEL
of the attendant
of the tape recorder.

You are becoming
a tape of history
recorded on bowls by women.

There is no abandoning
keeping pre-Columbians
alive.

*The little girl who crossed
herself before reaching
into the cookie jar.
New Year's Eve elders sit down at Chichicastenango, wise council of elders vote in a new council of elders tonight at Chichicastenango.

All men. Incense in the urns swings black smoke on church steps where the dead are pleased with it.

Old gods Kukulcán, Chac, Ix Chel—the woman with the snake on her head—dwell in the Catholic shockwhite church at Chichicastenango.

And the women go with their men into the night. The men get drunk; the women wait for them with ropes of rainbows around their bodies for clothes.

On the hill over church, the dead stone stare of a god, feathers of chickens all around, does not answer yes, chickens are killed—the bloodlet eye—for sacrifice at Chichicastenango, and coffins weave through streets, three times to the right, four times to the left, to confuse, to keep the dead from stumbling back to Chichicastenango.

Where men wear ordinary clothes and women remain ancient. Both, tonight, dress as bantams. Men bosses in a matriarchy. Midnight elders are changing hands. Colored smoke

*sacrificial incense of Mexico
crawls into January at Chichicastenango, Guatemala.
In that slow country owned by our fast States, this
country DDT's their trees, making poinsettias of Death
grow thick in the women's bodies
of rainbows' breasts,
cancers the babies,
and men bent over crops,
breathe in;
bring harvest to their lives.
The sacred Mayas,
the elected,
tonight,
the gods,
Church,
Spaniards

I speak of
in Chichicastenango,
participate
in the procession.
In Chichicastenango
coffins are turned
in complete
circles, three
times
to the right, four
times to the left.

Where a rainbow's seven colors
is considered lucky
to keep the Happy Dead from
finding their way back to breath.
Multinationals
O at Chichicastenango,
poetry turns laborious,
without wheels,
in the severed city of the sun,
three times
to the right, four times
to the left.

100
MADE IN MEXICO

I am
my own
Mexican maid,
and I treat
her like
red hearts

on a pepper tree
that might not
produce
if you don't
tend them
just so.

I pay her with
shining gloss
surroundings,
and she can
stop, were, king.
anytime and

dwell on light
and distances—
the miniscule
in my
kitchen hold.
She works

extra
for nothing—
for a song.
Holidays,
I prime her
with candy
and rompope
and let her off—
not easily,
but early.
Bent of my
Swedish shoulder

against
singing wheel's
happy turning,
she rearranges
boundaries and
space, like

a clearing
lady cleaning.
I own what I can
care for,
I care for

this maid.
By my
hands' ache—
hers,
in her own
territory

and time
attend.
Diamonds,
faucets,
the muscle of
mind—

uncovered
facets; hers,
new-to-me,
improve
mine.
The Mexicana
and I own
our own
land. How
the ground
feels, O and
the house
on it! She
flutters about,
her Swedish heart
opening up
to mariposas,
her privileged,
busy hands
alighting
flower chores,
exclaiming,
"Precious yellow-
hot morning
sweat
is mine
and sweet!")
I'm my own
Mexican maid.
She sings while
she works;
her own things
she's scrubbing.
I treat her as
I would myself—
exotically,
royally,
carefully as
dual monarch
butterflies
interlocked in
a garden aflame.
When she
gets uppity,
we get uppity
together.
When she turns
on me, I

become a slavish
red pepper
glowing in a
dazzling house
demanding
things get done.
GILDA OF THE AMAZON

I had trouble
distinguishing you
from other blondes
in the movie.

Who is that
with camera-
weighted neck?
A peculiar

twist to light
made natives
recognizable—
and you, a distant

lean stranger
signalling
by way of hair
a distinct village.

As if blondes
were towers
and bodies
were air bases,

Rapunzel
climbs down
the Amazon.
“With straw on her head,

what is she doing there?”
“Sprouting.”
“With gold on her head?”
“Slowing down.”

“Something’s
different about this one,”
(sed about blondes)
said Amazons,
whirling objects
in the sun—
and let her
in their design
to look backward
or through skin
scintillations O,
allowing loss of light,
a sunset glimpse
of again twin
flutes secreted
in holy hut
intoned
how blondes
found themselves
swinging their manes
flaring in shadows'
rippling arrows 'midst
bows of male bodies
scuffling.
A toss of light,
and you were all of
a forest of women
around the edge with
red-ant, ant-black hair
of blondes
haunted by people
they have loved.

Asserting swagger-
maze, she
climbs down
the amazed hatch,
unwinds flag
of the lopped breast,
the ◇ quiver
of poised ○ mirrors,
wood-stretched rainbow-
handles + cross—
Mexico’scape of Swedish cave—
sweetpitch of

off-colored hair
fit over like
are connecting
histories draw again

eye

hair

mirror

handle

matings.
In dust
from dancesweat,
blondes part air.

¡O pilota
cielablonda!
¡Mechón de la mente!
¡Cabellera de la cerebral!

¡Tocaya de luz!
¡Asombrosa de la luz!
¡O corazón Amazon y
cabeza heroica!

O familiar stranger from afar!
O gracing return! ¡O astronautas
a avistar en jungla!
¡O sol y pájaromosca sola!

Creo tu quiera me necesitar tu.
Quero tu, pero no necesidad tu.
Creo ésa es de cerca amor real
y por qué la identificación
con tu—porque conocemos
estas cosas.
Blondes are treated
unrealistically like gods

sez one pilot
of The Yellow Order
to the other as
they open banked clouds.

S.O.S. radio contact reports
United States inhabitants
having increasing
failing English

engine trouble!
Half Valkyries
holding up
California on their

cricket heads,
true blondes
come down
to gilded earth,

give Saint Teresa-type
flying! lessons.
COLORS<ARISE<
INCORONAS<
FLIGHT OF THE WHITEBIRD FROM MEXICO

They adulate your fledgling nose
in the color of another country,
Exotic Bird with split teeth
I'd like to plant gold between.
Your flight-rimmed iridescence—
your eyes' layers of azure hum—
your whelming feathers rise
and stir astronomers in persons.

Pilot of the single eye
at the side of the head
pivots above Earth, transfixed on
what catches, is caught championing
starchambers for children.
Breathless to dive, alight my
writing hand, ruffled wind creature
in your pride of motion, silver fright.

Adored Nordic return of farewells,
fear-to-the-quick colored Othertime,
Aztec Venus of long funny name—
Scrambling Egg - Crawling Stomach —
Winged Heartfall—tremor of birds
outside the window pull southward—
Quetzal! Quetzal! Quetzal! —
travel immortal . . . In pale life
they fly you
to Hollywood,
in a sliver
of flight . . .
YUCATAN BOUND

Mayans in boats won over China
by trading their eyes for scarves;
the Chinese tried out their English
on them and liked them.

While everyone else was eating,
you were filming
familiar people
eating foreign food,
sighting the continent of winding walls
mientras una china sonrio a tu altura:
while a Chinese woman smiled at your height.

In Summer’s starry October auburn sky,
you held a camera Chinawarm
and ocean baggage full of film.
The sun moved from spectator to participant
over tile roofs of a Seattle
no longer the same latitude
as Manchuria and Mongolia.
Your ebony hair turned Autumn,
your eyes became the Lord of the Dawn’s eyes,
only quieter,
to make the movie human.
Tu película revela humanidad:
Your film reveals humanity:
your eyes more contained by fairness;
dawns devoid of lords.
The masses more hopeful
you held in film,
filmed foreigners eating food.
In Mexico, owls
are the message bringers
mientras el español atora en mi garganta:
*while Spanish crows in my throat.*
Like an owl, with cameras in your eyes,
you flew to the top o’ the Wall, took
the temperature of the climate of the Yucatan.

*In this our time: how women lived—*
*sailed away from darkling Mixtec eyes—*
*into orb of light concentrate—*
*Quintana Roo! Quintana Roo!*
from reviews of previous work by Lynn Lonidier:

"Lonidier may well be to the 1970's what Gertrude Stein was to the 1920's."  
Jana Harris, Poetry Flash

"a highly complex, thoroughly personal and honest vision. Cranky, intense, direct, filled with humor and sarcasm, these unpunctuated prose poems become a world as much as they respond to one."
Ron Silliman, San Francisco Review of Books

"Lynn Lonidier's poems take the reader on a circular voyage by air, ocean, and imagination to many realistic and surrealist places."
Judy Thrall, 13th Moon

"Lonidier's style reminds me a bit of Ginsberg or John Wieners, something which operates at the frontiers of consciousness, though her themes and thought-patterns are totally female."
Judith Crewe, Body Politic (Canada)

"Lynn is probably a reincarnated Emily Dickinson. An updated anachronism. Anyway another century and cerebrally flushed."
Jill Johnston, The Village Voice