"I am Joaquin"
By RODOLFO "CORKY" GONZALES

I am Joaquin,
Lost in a world of confusion,
Caught up in a whirl of a gringo society,
Confused by the rules, Scorned by attitudes,
Suppressed by manipulations, And destroyed by modern society.
My fathers have lost the economic battle and won the struggle of cultural survival.
And now! I must choose between the paradox of
Victory of the spirit, despite physical hunger
Or
to exist in the grasp of American social neurosis,
sterilization of the soul, and a full stomach.
YES,
I have come a long way to nowhere, Unwillingly dragged by that monstrous, technical industrial giant called Progress and Anglo success
I look at myself. I watch my brothers.
I shed tears of sorrow.
I sow seeds of hate.
I withdraw to the safety within the Circle of life . . .
MY OWN PEOPLE

I am Cuauhtemoc,
Proud and Noble Leader of men, King of an empire,
civilized beyond the dreams of the Gachupin Cortez,
Who also is the blood, the image of myself.

I am the Maya Prince.
I am Netzahualcoyotl,
Great leader of the Chichimecas.
I am the sword and flame of Cortez the despot.
And

I am the Eagle and Serpent of the Aztec civilization.
I owned the land as far as the eye could see under the crown of Spain,
and I toiled on my earth and gave my Indian sweat and blood for the Spanish master,
Who ruled with tyranny over man and beast and all that he could trample
But . . .

THE GROUND WAS MINE.
I was both tyrant and slave.
As Christian church took its place in God’s good name,
to take and use my Virgin strength and Trusting faith,
The priests both good and bad, took
But
gave a lasting truth that
Spaniard, Indian, Mestizo
Were all God’s children
And from these words grew men who prayed and fought
for their own worth as human beings, for that
GOLDEN MOMENT
Of
FREEDOM.

I was part in blood and spirit of that courageous village priest
Hidalgo in the year eighteen hundred and ten
who rang the bell of independence
and gave out that lasting cry:
El Grito de Dolores,
"Que mueran los Gachupines y que viva la Virgin de Guadalupe"
I sentenced him who was me.
I excommunicated him my blood.
I drove him from the Pulpit to lead a bloody revolution for him and me I
killed him.
His head, which is mine and all of those who have conic this way,
I placed on that fortress wall to wall for Independence.
Morelos!
Matamoros!
Guerrero!
All Compañeros in the act,
STOOD AGAINST THAT WALL OF INFAMY
to feel the hot gouge of lead which my hands made.
I died with them . . . I lived with them
I lived to see our country free.
Free from Spanish rule in eighteen -hundred- twenty-one.
Mexico was Free
The crown was gone
but

all his parasites remained and ruled and taught with gun and flame and
mystic power.
I worked, I sweated, I bled, I prayed and
waited silently for life to again commence.
I fought and died for Don Benito Juarez Guardian of the Constitution.
I was him on clasty roads on barren land
as he protected his archives as Moses did his sacraments.
He held his Mexico in his hand on
the most desolate and remote ground
which was his country And this Giant
Little Zapotec gave not one palm’s breadth
of his country’s land to Kings or Monarchs or Presidents
of foreign powers.

I am Joaquin.
I rode with Pancho Villa, crude and warm.
A tornado at full strength, nourished and inspired by the passion and
the fire of all his earth, people.
I am Emillano Zapata.
"This Land This Earth Is OURS"
The Villages
The Mountains
The Streams
belong to Zapatistas.
Our life
Or yours is the only trade for soft brown earth and maiz.
All of which is our reward, A creed that formed a constitution for all
who dare live free!
"This land is ours . . . Father, I give it back to you.
Mexico must be free . . .'
I ride with Revolutionists
against myself.
I am Rural Course and brutal,
I am the mountain Indian, superior over all.
The thundering hoof beats are my horses.
The chattering of machine guns'
are death to all of me:
Yaqui
Tarahumara
Chamula
Zapotec
Mestizo
Español

I have been the Bloody Revolution,
The Victor,
The Vanquished,
I have killed and been killed.
I am despots Diaz and Huerta and the apostle of democracy
Francisco Madero.
I am the black shawled faithful women who die with me
or live depending on the time and place.
I am faithful, humble, Juan Diego, the Virgen de Guadalupe,
Tonantz, Aztec Goddess too.

I rode the mountains of San Joaquin. I rode as far East and North as the
Rocky Mountains
And all men feared the guns of Joaquin Murietta.
I killed those men who dared to steal my mine,
who raped and Killed my Love my Wife
Then
I Killed to stay alive.
I was Alfego. Baca, living my nine lives fully.
I was the Espinoza brothers of the Valle de San Luis.
All, were added to the number of heads that in the name of civilization
were placed on the wall of independence.
Heads of brave men who died for cause or principle.
Good or Bad.
Hidalgo! Zapata!
Murrietta! Espinozas!
are but a few.
They dared to face The force of tyranny of men who rule
by farce and hypocrisy I stand here looking back, and now I see the present
and still I am the campesino I am the fat political coyote
I, of the same name,
Joaquin.

In a country that has wiped out All my history, stifled all my pride.
In a country that has placed a different weight of indignity upon my age old burdened back.
Inferiority is the new load . . .
The Indian has endured and still emerged the winner,
The Mestizo must yet overcome, and the Gachupin will just ignore.
I look at myself and see part of me who rejects my father and my mother and dissolves into the melting pot to disappear in shame.
I sometimes sell my brother out and reclaim him for my own when society, gives me token leadership in society's own name.

I am Joaquin, who bleeds in many ways.
The altars of Moctezuma I stained a bloody red.
My back of Indian Slavery was stripped crimson from the whips of masters who would lose their blood so pure when Revolution made them pay Standing against the walls of Retribution, Blood . . .
Has flowed from me on every battlefield between Campesino, Hacendado Slave and Master and Revolution.
I jumped from the tower of Chapultepec into the sea of fame;
My country's flag my burial shroud;
With Los Niños, whose pride and courage could not surrender with indignity their country's flag . . . in their land.

To strangers now I bleed in some smelly cell from club.
or gun. or tyranny.
I bleed as the vicious gloves of hunger cut my face and eyes, as I fight my way from stinking Barrios to the glamour of the Ring and lights of fame or mutilated sorrow.
My blood runs pure on the ice caked hills of the Alaskan Isles, on the corpse strewn beach of Normandy, the foreign land of Korea and now Viet Nam.

Here I stand
before the Court of Justice Guilty for all the glory of my Raza to be sentenced to despair.
Here I stand Poor in money Arrogant with pride Bold with Machismo Rich in courage and Wealthy in spirit and faith
My knees are caked with mud.
My hands calloused from the hoe.
I have made the Anglo rich yet Equality is but a word, the Treaty of Hidalgo has been broken and is but another treacherous promise. My land is lost and stolen,
My culture has been raped, lengthen
the line at the welfare door and fill the jails with crime.
These then are the rewards this society has For sons of Chiefs
and Kings and bloody Revolutionists.
Who gave a foreign people all their skills and ingenuity
to pave the way with Brains and Blood
for those hordes of Gold starved Strangers
Who changed our language and plagiarized our deeds
as feats of valor of their own. They frowned upon our way of life
and took what they could use.
Our Art
Our Literature
Our music,
they ignored so they left the real things of value and grabbed at their
own
destruction by their Greed and Avarice
They overlooked that cleansing fountain of nature and brotherhood
Which is Joaquin.
The art of our great señores Diego Rivera
Siqueiros Orozco is but another act of revolution for the Salvation of
mankind.
Mariachi music, the heart and soul of the people of the earth,
the life of child, and the happiness of love
The Corridos tell the tales of life and death, of tradition,
Legends old and new, of Joy of passion and sorrow of the people:

who I am.
I am in the eyes of woman, sheltered beneath
her shawl of black, deep and sorrowful eyes,
That bear the pain of sons long buried or dying, Dead
on the battlefield or on the barbed wire of social strife.
Her rosary she prays and fingers
endlessly like the family working down a row of beets to turn around and
work and work
There is no end.
Her eyes a mirror of all the warmth and all the love for me,
And I am her And she is me.
We face life together in sorrow.
anger, joy, faith and wishful thoughts.
I shed tears of anguish as I see my children disappear behind the shroud
of mediocrity
never to look back to remember me.

I am Joaquin.
I must fight And win this struggle for my sons,
and they must know from me Who I am.
Part of the blood that runs deep in me
Could not be vanquished by the Moors
I defeated them after five hundred years,
and I endured.
The part of blood that is mine
has labored endlessly five-hundred years under the heel of lustful
Europeans
I am still here!

I have endured in the rugged mountains of our country
I have survived the toils and slavery, of the fields.
I have existed in the barrios of the city,
in the suburbs of bigotry, in the mines of social snobbery,
in the prisons of dejection, in the muck of exploitation
and in the fierce heat of racial hatred.
And now the trumpet sounds,
The music of the people stirs the
Revolution, Like a sleeping giant it slowly rears its head
to the sound of Tramping feet Clamouring voices Marlachi strains
Fiery tequila explosions The smell of chile verde and
Soft brown eyes of expectation for a better life
And in all the fertile farm lands, the barren plains,
the mountain villages, smoke smeared cities

We start to MOVE.
La Raza!
Mexicano!
Español!
Latino!
Hispano!
Chicano!
or whatever I call myself,
I look the same
I feel the same
I cry
and
Sing the same
I am the masses of my people and I refuse to be absorbed.
I am Joaquin
The odds are great but my spirit is strong
My faith unbreakable
My blood is pure
I am Aztec Prince and Christian Christ

I SHALL ENDURE!

Rodolfo Gonzales, boxer, civil rights organizer and poet, died on April 12, 2005.
La Guera
Cherrie Moraga

It requires something more than personal experience to gain a philosophy or point of view from any specific event. It is the quality of our response to the event and our capacity to enter into the lives of others that help us to make their lives and experiences our own.

Emma Goldman*

I am the very well-educated daughter of a woman who, by the standards in this country, would be considered largely illiterate. My mother was born in Santa Paula, Southern California, at a time when much of the central valley there was still farm land. Nearly thirty-five years later, in 1948, she was the only daughter of six to marry an Anglo, my father.

I remember all of my mother’s stories, probably much better than she realizes. She is a fine story-teller, recalling every event of her life with the vividness of the present, noting each detail right down to the cut and color of her dress. I remember stories of her being pulled out of school at the ages of five, seven, nine, and eleven to work in the fields, along with her brothers and sisters; stories of her father drinking away whatever small profit she was able to make for the family; of her going the long way home to avoid meeting him on the street, staggering toward the same destination. I remember stories of my mother lying about her age in order to get a job as a hat-check girl at Agua Caliente Racetrack in Tijuana. At fourteen, she was the main support of the family. I can still see her walking home alone at 3 a.m., only to turn all of her salary and tips over to her mother, who was pregnant again.

The stories continue through the war years and on: walnut-cracking factories, the Voit Rubber factory, and then the computer boom. I remember my mother doing piecework for the electronics plant in our neighborhood. In the late evening, she would sit in front of the TV, set, wrapping copper wires into the backs of circuit boards, talking about “keeping up with the younger girls.” By that time, she was already in her mid-fifties.

Meanwhile, I was college-prep in school. After classes, I would go
with my mother to fill out job applications for her, or write checks for
her at the supermarket. We would have the scenario all worked out
ahead of time. My mother would sign the check before we'd get to the
store. Then, as we'd approach the checkstand, she would say - within
earshot of the cashier — 'Oh honey, you go 'head and make out the
check,' as if she couldn't be bothered with such an insignificant detail.
No one asked any questions.

I was educated, and wore it with a keen sense of pride and satisfac-
tion, my head propped up with the knowledge, from my mother,
that my life would be easier than hers. I was educated; but more than
this, I was "la guera": fair-skinned. Born with the features of my
Chicana mother, but the skin of my Anglo father, I had it made.

No one ever quite told me this (that light was right), but I knew that
being light was something valued in my family (who were all Chicano,
with the exception of my father). In fact, everything about my
upbringing (at least what occurred on a conscious level) attempted
to bleach me of what color I did have. Although my mother was fluent in
it, I was never taught much Spanish at home. I picked up what I did
learn from school and from over-heard snatches of conversation
among my relatives and mother. She often called other lower-income
Mexicans "braceros", or "wet-backs", referring to herself and her
family as "a different class of people." And yet, the real story was that
my family, too, had been poor (some still are) and farmworkers. My
mother can remember this in her blood as if it were yesterday. But this
is something she would like to forget (and rightfully), for her, on a
basic economic level. Being Chicana meant being "less." It was through
my mother's desire to protect her children from poverty and illiteracy
that we became "anglicized"; the more effectively we could pass in the
white world, the better guaranteed our future.

From all of this, I experience, daily, a huge disparity between what I
was born into and what I was to grow up to become. Because, (as
Goldman suggests) these stories my mother told me crept under my
"guera" skin. I had no choice but to enter into the life of my mother. I
had no choice. I took her life into my heart, but managed to keep a lid
on it as long as I feigned being the happy, upwardly mobile
heterosexual.

When I finally lifted the lid to my lesbianism, a profound connection
with my mother reawakened in me. It wasn't until I acknowledged
and confronted my own lesbianism in the flesh, that my heartfelt
identification with and empathy for my mother's oppression - due to
being poor, uneducated, and Chicana — was realized. My lesbianism
is the avenue through which I have learned the most about silence and
oppression, and it continues to be the most tactile reminder to me that
we are not free human beings.

You see, I am one of the other. I had known for years that I was a
lesbian. I had felt it in my bones, had ached with the knowledge, gone
crazed with the knowledge, wallowed in the silence of it. Silence is
like starvation. Don't be fooled. It's nothing short of that, and felt most
sharply when one has a full belly most of her life. When we are not
physically starving, we have the luxury to realize psychic and
emotional starvation. It is from this starvation that other starvations
can be recognized - if one is willing to take the risk of making the
connection - if one is willing to be responsible to the result of the
connection. For me, the connection is an inevitable one.

What I am saying is that the joys of looking like a white girl ain't so
great since I realized I could be beaten on the street for being a dyke. If
my sister's being beaten because she's Black, it's pretty much the same
principle. We're both getting beaten any way you look at it. The con-
nection is blatant: and in the case of my own family, the difference in
the privileges attached to looking white instead of brown are merely a
generation apart.

In this country, lesbianism is a poverty-as is being brown, as is
being a woman, as is being just plain poor. The danger lies in ranking
the oppressions. The danger lies in failing to acknowledge the specificity
of the oppression. The danger lies in attempting to deal with oppression
purely from a theoretical base. Without an emotional, heartfelt
grappling with the source of our own oppression, without naming the
enemy within ourselves and outside of us, no authentic, non-hierarchi-
cal connection among oppressed groups can take place.

When the going gets rough, will we abandon our so-called comrades
in a flurry of racist/heterosexist-what-have-you panic? To whose
camp, then, should the lesbian of color retreat? Her very presence
violates the ranking and abstraction of oppression. Do we merely live
hand to mouth? Do we merely struggle with the "ism" that's sitting on
top of our own heads?

The answer is: yes, I think first we do: and we must do so thoroughly
and deeply. But to fail to move out from there will only isolate us in
our own oppression - will only insulate, rather than radicalize us.

To illustrate: a gay male friend of mine once confided to me that he
could feel that, on some level, I didn't trust him because he was
male; that he felt, really, if it ever came down to a "battle of the sexes",
I might kill him. I admitted that I might very well. He wanted to under-
stand the source of my distrust. I responded, "You're not a woman. Be a
woman for a day. Imagine being a woman." He confessed that the
thought terrified him because, to him, being a woman meant being
El poema “Heritage” de Lorna Dee Cervantes revela la discrepancia entre las expectativas culturales y lingüísticas por parte de los demás hacia una mujer de apellido hispano, y su falta de identificación con lo hispano y con el español:

Heritage
I look for you all day in the streets of Oaxaca.
The children run to me, laughing,
spinning me blind and silly.
They call to me in words of another language.
My brown body searches the streets
for the dye that will color my thoughts.
But Mexico gags
“ESPUTA”
on this bland pochaseed.
I didn’t ask to be brought up tonta.
My name hangs about me like a loose tooth.
Old women know my secret,
“Es la culpa de los antepasados”
Blame it on the old ones.
They give me a name
that fights me.9

El verdadero apellido de la poeta, Cervantes, sugerido mediante la imagen de “my name” que “hangs about me like a loose tooth”, exacerba la discrepancia entre las expectativas de la raza y herencia hispana, y la constitución bicultural del yo poético que no responde a esa tradición en su totalidad. En búsqueda de sus raíces hispanas, —“Heritage/I look for you”...—, la hablante poética reafirma su distanciamiento ante la tradición y lengua de sus padres. En este caso no podemos dejar de asociar la voz poética con la autora, ya que su apellido es el mismo del autor del Quijote, la gran novela de la literatura hispana. Se podría decir que su apellido la persigue como una sombra. Ella, sin embargo, escribe poesía y no prosa, en inglés, no en español, y desde una perspectiva definitivamente feminista. Por eso se denomina “pochaseed”, supuesta traidora de su herencia hispana. En calidad de pocha, su cuerpo, de piel oscura, es un vehículo cargado de pensamientos “blancos”, sin color.10 El Otro para Cervantes es el mexicano de México que la acusa de liberación sexual (“ESPUTA” sugiere “es puta”) y de “tonta” (v. 11) por no hablar español; igualmente sus antepasados configuran un “otro” ya que le dieron un apellido conflictivo con su identidad. Nótese el uso del español para referirse a los insultos por parte del enemigo, aquí el mexicano mismo, y para aludir a sus antepasados, con quienes la hablante poética no se puede identificar.11

Tal dualidad ontológica entre el nombre, la supuesta identidad hispana, y la realidad interior del individuo bicultural se expresa asimismo en otro poema de Cervantes, “Refugee Ship”, en el cual la voz poética se presenta como una refugiada que nunca encontrará su propio locus:

Mama raised me without language.
I’m orphaned from my Spanish name.
The words are foreign, stumbling
on my tongue. I see in the mirror
my reflection: bronzed skin, black hair.

La hablante poética americana, ni en español, de literario de la ausencia de dicha cultural. La re bastante común...

Sandra mártingiendo la lo sweet borinque white though queño(s)”, con lica o síntesis poemas de Lo también es la la...

Por otro lado y cultural que...

El cambio de cé “pero” y “but” lingüística y on en una identidivantes:

Esteves con alusión a Lolita toda su obra po en los Estados I década de 1950 políticos puertor nueva fuerza e in la imagen de las