

DELILAH MONTOYA

Activating Chicana Resistance

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eight years ago, be an unusual situation,
left childhood home in South Omaha – racially integrated Midwest ghetto,
and moved to the west side of Denver – an inner city barrio,
in Omaha I minority community,
in Denver my status that, of the major people,
marvel feeling to step on a bus and see all that raza,
never realized there were so many of us,
experienced a lot of firsts: pollution, segregation, traffic jams and graffiti,
witnessed the red glow of a city night sky and life seemed very different,
could be said this experience changed the way I saw our world,
a need to document the neighborhood life on Inca Street,
before departure to New Mexico, spent
three days shooting, the nooks and niches that impressed my daily walk to work,
a way to say good bye to Inca Street, a way internalize experience,
Inca Street images remain with out a voice kept on hold,
intentions project a way a coherent form.....,
problem how express commotion, noise vigor – soul of Inca Street,
presenting the imagery of Inca Street wish to convey concept “sensualismo”,
to illustrate that the idea I believe a literary mediation can,
stimulate additional levels of perception,
for this reason I collaborate with
Crickets In My Mind,
a manuscript produced by Cecilio Garcia-Camarillo,
the political ideology embodied in this manuscript codifies “sensualismo”,
although both levels of creative production stand on their own right,
their juxtaposition clarifies sensualismo as a concrete concept,
“the appetite of the flesh for the flesh” embodied within
the mores institutions and life styles of our time and space,
sensualismo the dark side of our being the need to feed,
the ego that hungers to be one with otherness,
the object of our disclosure in *Crickets In My Mind* is to reveal,
the encounter of extremes causing our world to seem disjointed,
the following descriptions of these extremes manifest in,
polarization of opposing forces within this polarization or disjuncture,
“sensualismo” can best be experiences,
by designing this text with this concept in mind,
we hope to re-create the phenomena in question,
projecting Inca Street imagery onto narrative constituted,
by *Crickets In My Mind*, a new flower and song be tolled

1. Ramon, the philosopher

These last few days I've seen posters around town announcing my being here tonight at St. Mary's University to talk with you about "sensualismo", and I've been wondering what has gone through the minds of those of you that read the posters and came face to face with that word. Well, let me tell you, it's a very heavy thing. I've been at it for forty years, and it has been beautiful looking for what was missing not only in my life, but in the bloodstream of the government, churches and institutions.

When I first started on this journey, I was trying to solve the enigma behind the hollow mythology that governed the two worlds that I saw, one dying because it was so fat and the other dying of starvation. I just couldn't handle the contradiction. And so you're wondering, but where does this fit in with "sensualismo"? Well, I'm getting to it, but first let me tell you that I went to a biblical institute but left very soon because I couldn't stomach their mystical hangup, and the I joined the

militant Chicanos from New Mexico. Maybe there I'd find what I was looking for. And so I ended up with Reies López Tixerina, carrying a machine gun, still looking. I fought for our old, ancestral lands in the Southwest with so much passion, but you know, it wasn't there. So I moved to psychiatry, politics. Nothing.

Maybe some of you have heard me talk about "sensualismo" before, and make no mistake about it, that's what I'm going to talk about tonight. The answer came to me more or less in 1971. In the vision I heard a voice that said, "Well, this is it, you just haven't been able to see "sensualismo". The answer was as follows, and now we're going to get serious tonight: "Todo lo que se mira no es, y lo que es, no se mira. What one sees is not real, because the real cannot be seen." I jumped out of the vision and grabbed a pencil and wrote. For me that was the happiest moment in my life. I looked around me and saw differently. Before I couldn't justify the incredible complexes of society that allows some to have shoes and others not. Those polarities just didn't fit in my head and they made me nauseous. The solution, I knew, was something sublime, important, superior.

And so I started analyzing life. I found out that "sensualismo" has had an empire on the planet for many centuries. It's an old sickness born with the very first man. All physical and mental illnesses come from "sensualismo" because when I talk of "sensualismo" I'm talking about something that just ain't working right. Yes, man has always sought progress, but his "sensualismo" has always been with him, chopping away, and maybe eventually it will cause his total win, because one thing for sure is that "sensualismo" is inseparable from life. "Sensualismo" is the appetite of the flesh for the flesh. And in this world "sensualismo" has a million disguises. Avarice is just one. But surely all of you here tonight can think of hundreds in a few minutes. Now, when I talk of "sensualismo" I'm not talking about religion. I won't have a thing to do with religion. I'm not asking you to sing or pray or to give a donation because that too is "sensualismo". What is real you can't see, and man's perversion of the senses looks for what is, for what he can see, but like I said, what one sees is not real....

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2. John the old hitch-hiker

Not many people showed up at Ramon's lecture. What a copout. Ramon's such a dynamic speaker with his ranting, arms moving around like the blades of a helicopter and his manhandling of the podium. I got him the gig for Chicano week at the University, and it came at the right time for him. All his insights into humanity had been building up, and his throwing it all out in front of people was what he needed. Man, he was wiredup for the night, but the students didn't show up. They wanted Reies López Tixerina and his struggle to get back our lands in the Southwest, lands that were ripped-off in

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the conquest of 1848. But hell, they couldn't come up with the money. Reies has to eat too. He just couldn't fly out here at his own expense because a bunch of tweety-birds that don't know how to get money out of the administration wanted to hear him. So, some boycotted you, Ramón, but you didn't care. You gave it all you had, and you touched all of us and made us come in contact with our feelings. Ramón, you old barrio prophet, you that know so much about the excesses of human nature, do you think you can help me in the relationship with the one I love? Yes, he wants to listen to me, and so I'm meeting him at a restaurant. I can almost hear him calling me a sensualista as I see the old hitch-hiker, and I stop.

It's so cold; almost a ½ inch sheet of ice on the car this morning. The old man's frozen face is slightly purple, just one or two teeth move around inside his thin lips. He's hurting; looks totally sucked dry under his huge duffle bag. --Warm up a while. Looks like a bad time for hitch-hiking.

--Yeah, this is the first time I hitch-hike and I guess I didn't pick very good weather. I'm John. I've been trying to get to San Antonio since yesterday. A cop stopped me and told me not to put out my thumb on the freeway in town or else he'd put me in jail. I had to walk at least ten miles before I could find a place to sleep.

--You should've asked the cop for a ride.

--Hell, I was afraid. On the road I had talked to this young hippie, and he told me they put him in jail for ten days cause he couldn't pay a \$50 hitch-hiking fine in El Paso.

--You sound like your lungs freezed up a little standing out there.

--For sure. I haven't done well lately. You know, I just got out of the hospital. Had a heart operation, and I thought I was going to die. I was on the critical list for about twenty days. I lost everything. I had to sell my house and my car to pay the doctor's bills. That's why I'm hitch-hiking. I'm trying to get to Florida and maybe pull together what's left of me.

--Man, it's so cold; I almost wore out the battery trying to get this thing going.

--Sure. This is too cold for an old man. I'd have frozen on the freeway last night.

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--Yeah, my house is pretty cold too. I can't seem to sleep well these days. Too many tensions with my wife, I guess.

--Well, you know, at least you got someone for company. I ain't got nobody in this world, and the doctor took everything I had. One has dreams of having a place to go to when you retire, but now I just got my few years left. That's all.

--Didn't you get any help from the government, Medicaid or something?

--No, sure didn't and it was sure expensive at the hospital. I had to have a nurse by my side day and night.

--Well, I'm glad you made it through, but it seems to me the government owed you something.

--Well, I'll see what happens when I get to Florida about some help. But I've got to work, You know, sometimes I've had to spend the night out on the freeways. I never thought I'd be hitch-hiking at my age. Never.

I notice that the old man has watered-down blue eyes, held there by a bunch of wrinkles. The car's heater has made his face more human. His half-frozen words have settled over Ramón's sensualism somewhere in my soul. Ramón, would it do any good for you to talk to this old hitch-hiker? My heart thumps roughly as I hit the brakes by the freeway exit.

--Sir, we're outside the city limits. The cops can't hassle you now.

The old man gives me a startled look. I guess he was beginning to feel comfortable and I caught him by surprise.

-Oh yes, son, sure. I do thank you young man. I sure do and God bless you.

--Yeah, but I wouldn't let that doctor even touch me.

--Oh no, I said God.

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Ramón, what would you have said to the old hitch-hiker? Could you have solved anything? I gave him a few bucks for coffee, listened to him. What else? I couldn't drive him to Florida. And what really can you do for me? I waited at the restaurant, loading up with coffee, trying to loosen up these damned nerves that get so tangled up in things. But either you got tired of waiting or you never showed-up, Ramón, so I missed more of your rap on human excesses. I'm afraid, Ramón, that the relationship with my wife is falling apart, and yes, I know that fear is just another one of the masks of "sensualismo".

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3. Letter to David

Hey brother, it was real nice to hear from you, and how does it feel to be an honest to goodness Chicano political exile in Canada, so far from your tacos de carne guisada, your poverty-stricken barrios and your beer-stained, bilingual raps. I told you, organizers should stay out of electoral politics and just concentrate on working with the people. Your political opponent whose nose you rearranged forever, once again almost looks like a Mercedes Benz, and yes, he did win the seat at city council.

I'm still being an editor, and although I've got no time for myself and very little of anything for Mariann and our little one, it needs to be done. The journal is being distributed internationally now, and that makes me feel great. The world has to know about Chicanos; we refuse to remain invisible, to use your line.

I'm writing to you from a restaurant where they're playing lousy muzak, but this is where the artist I'm to talk to set up the appointment. She wants me to see her latest pen and ink drawings dealing with police brutality.

Still doing the same things here. The political study groups are going strong. Right now we're dealing with racism in general and racism within the leftist movement. The cultural arts are stronger than ever. There's rumors of printing equipment coming our way from heaven knows where. Can you imagine, we'll be able to print our own books!

Tell me, are the Canadians still complaining about American professors controlling their universities and about American businessmen just assuming that the Great Lakes were given to them by God?

I ran into Consuelo about two days ago and she didn't say much. Just that things are over between you and that she couldn't take Canada's weather. What can I say? I'm going through the whole mess myself. We're still together but it's just like living with a stranger. Worse, because strangers don't fight all the time, and that's all we do. If all that negative energy could be put into constructive projects, man, I'd be el poeta más chingón de Aztlán. It's impossible to reconcile our differences.

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This is the same cruddy situation I grew up in. Igualita. Chingao, and I always dreamed of something different. Harmony, me entiendes? Yeah, I know “The past repeats itself”.

I want to share a dream I had last night. Ramón Tijerina, the old barrio philosopher, gave a talk a few nights ago. He blew up the few people that showed up with his “sensualismo” bombs. You’ve heard it all, I’m sure. Well, he was in the dream, and so was an old hitch-hiker I picked up yesterday. And how could I forget my old, alcoholic Papá, the main man in my life that I hardly know cause he was never around. Let’s see if it’s Freudian enough for you.

I’m walking up a staircase, feeling a little nervous, and my hands are very tired. At the top is a door. Everything’s so silent. The door opens and a boy smiles at me. After a while I realize that it’s me, with the same haircut and my favorite checkered shirt of middle school years. I try to figure out the smile on the younger me. It’s not diabolical or frightened, but more like a smile apart. But what starts worrying me is that I can’t figure out how I’m reacting to the presence of the younger me. Damn it, what’s the expression on my face. The younger me keeps smiling. I want to touch him, but my hands weigh so much. The younger me moves aside and I walk into a large room with dim lights. On one side there’s a tunnel and on the other a huge wall that seems to be made of gelatin. His smiling head has detached from its body and floats through the gelatin and comes at me. Now it’s Ramón Tijerina smiling his smile of knowledge. Then it’s the old hitch-hiker with his smile of pain. Then it becomes Papa drunk out of his mind. His eyes are bloodshot and half-closed. Saliva rolls down the absurd smile. Now the body of the younger me walks through the gelatin wall and connects with the head. The younger me smiles at me once again. He’s in front of me now, pressing himself against me. I feel his face on mine, his teeth rubbing against mine, and the sound scares me. Then he slowly walks towards the tunnel. The younger me turns and looks at me, still smiling. It feels like he’s smiling for his own benefit because he’s in harmony with himself. How did I figure that out? I don’t know, it just feels that way. He walks into the tunnel and I want to follow him, but I really don’t know if I can trust him, and besides, I can’t because my hands are simply too heavy.

David, I’m still curious about the look on the older me in the dream. Strange that throughout the dream when all these incredible things were happening, I kept thinking about the expression on my own face. How was I reacting to it all? Give me some feedback. She’s here. Back to business. I’ll let you know when it’s safe for you to come back home. Hold it together like I’m trying to. Your comrade.

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4. Co-counseling with Andres

-- It's really getting bad with Mariann. I just don't trust her anymore, and when you don't trust someone, that leaves a pretty lousy foundation for any kind of relationship. Mariann is going through drastic changes, and it's difficult for me cause I'm the follower, and the changes she wants are painful to me because they're pointing at a direction that's radically different from the way we've related before. It seems to me she's running downhill at full speed, and I just can't catch up with her because it's one change after another happening too fast. Her main thing is to be out of the house hanging around with her friends. I remember there were issues we agreed to about ten years ago, like fidelity, trust, the family, communicating, even not dancing with anybody else when we went out cause both of us were jealous. We felt good about the agreements, but over the years things have deteriorated. We were separated for about six months by mutual agreement to get a perspective on the relationship, and we came back strongly when we decided to buy a house. We felt a space of our own might be what would help us. But now she's talking about separating again and living like lovers, and this is very confusing to me, especially since we already have three children. She wants us to see each other now and then and not have an everyday relationship that includes the totality of each other's personalities, but rather one based on a few common interests, and we can meet and make love passionately for a few minutes. Man, that's artificial. What she wants is room for other relationships. This lover idea came out of the separation at which time Mariann developed a strong attraction to another man, something that up to now she has refused to admit. I think she's just looking for a way to have me and this other guy and maybe others. Again, her freedom is the most important thing. So now she goes out all the time with her friends and sometimes she doesn't even show up at the house for two or three days.

-- Do you remember when life first threw a big situation at you where you had to change or adapt?

--Yeah, that happened with my father and his drinking problem. What I had to accept was that I was going to live a life without a father. I never knew him and that hurt me a lot. I was basically formed by my mother, and up to the moment I still suffer the profound need of knowing a father. And so Mariann has male friends separate from me. At first it didn't bother me, and I knew a lot of them, and I see nothing wrong with friendships, but I feel weird when I see her really enjoying herself with strangers.

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-- I asked you about the situation where you had to change because I wanted us to explore the feelings that are coming out right now and whether they're similar to those when you had to undergo other changes.

-- How I dealt with Papá was that I just severed the relationship completely. The same could happen with Mariann because, like Papá, she has decided that she's going to live life in a certain way and is unwilling to compromise. When I realized Papá was not going to change,

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I decided that the only way I could survive was by cutting off everything I felt towards him. I must have been thirteen or fourteen.

-- That was your defense?

-- Yes, I couldn't deal with the mess, especially the fighting that would begin at one or two in the morning and go on for hours. Every fucking night. And there we were, all of us kids at school pretending that everything was great. I still can't sleep well cause I keep waking up when I hear all the fighting that has become my memory of the past. Recently I read an article about sons and daughters of alcoholics, and it said that a predominant characteristic of such children is that they can't express their emotions. So what I had to do to survive was to go into myself, and that became my pattern. When things go bad it's easy for me to go into my depressed isolation and cut myself off from Mariann. A point of great friction between us is that, as you already know, we're from different socio-economic backgrounds, she's middle and I'm working class, not to mention different races and cultures, and I feel the need to include these realities in our discussions, but she doesn't feel they're important. She prefers to focus on emotions, and I don't feel there will be many resolutions if we exclude these bigger issues. So I keep the frustration in cause I know that if I express my feelings there's going to be a fight. If I remain in my silent depression at least the situation remains kind of neutral.

You know, I mentioned that Mariann seems to be going downhill at full speed; well, the last thing she did was to cut her hair. I mean hair that hung down to her butts, hair she'd been growing for over twenty years. I just don't know what went through her. When I asked her about it she snarled that it was her hair. That's how defensive she gets. And so now she's got herself a punk hairdo. She's really becoming a stranger, and I feel that in her exuberant, downhill joy ride everything goes. The next thing she's going to be demanding is to sever it all cause she loves this other man, and I just don't know if I'm ready to deal with that now.

-- You've struggled with the relationship for a long time, but you haven't left her like you left your Papá at the emotional level. Why are you still fighting for this relationship?

-- Yes, well, how can I say it...I believe in the relationship. I think that the best thing that can happen in a lifetime is an intimate alliance between a man and a woman.

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I've lived alone, intentionally isolated from society in out-in-nowhere farms, when I was younger and developing as a poet. I think I do have the power to live alone, but what would be missing there is the intimacy and warmth that can exist between a man and a woman. What I'm trying to say is that I love Mariann, and then there's the fact that we have three children. For almost a year now I've felt a surge, an effusion of good feelings towards Mariann, a deeper love you might say, and also a much greater sexual drive, but she's not there for me. She feels trapped at the house. She says she's nomadic by nature, her Viking blood, and emotionally she feels more comfortable with friendships. For her an intimate relationship is not important because it creates a dependency, brings out all sorts of commitments that she doesn't need, and besides, that's the perfect set-up for manipulation. I feel I've changed a lot not only because of my own needs, but also to accommodate Mariann's demands. In the past I was involved in so many socio-political-literary activities, but I don't do that anymore. My needs became to focus on the one I love, the family, the home, share of the work, even expressing my feelings, but it's not enough. It's never enough for her. I feel angry right now. I'm still recuperating from the cutting of her hair. I feel hurt cause it seems like she did that as a violent act against me, to punish me.

-- When she hurts your feelings, what do you do with them?

-- I keep them with me, just like I did with my feelings toward Papá.

-- Do you want to try something? Why don't you straighten up. Here, try hitting this pillow.

-- Just as if it were Mariann's face, eh?

-- How do you like Mariann's haircut?

-- You know, we haven't made love since the haircut. It feels like I'd be making love to a man. She looks like a young man.

-- Well, brother, it's time to let those feelings out.

-- It's better to have a fight, eh? I hate to fight, especially in front of the children. And that's a constant thing now. What I hated the most in life, what was done to me by my parents and messed me up, now I'm doing to my children. But once we start we can't control it. It's horrible for me so I can imagine what it must be like for the little ones.

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-- I wasn't suggesting you get into a fight with Mariann.

-- Give me that pillow and I'll hit Mariann's face and punch out her snout (laughing).

-- What you were saying about the survey on children of alcoholics, it translates to me as passivity. What we're trying to do with the men's support group is to form a secure place where we can release our feelings so that we won't have to carry them with us till we dump them on some person in an irrational manner. In this exercise with the pillow you have to create the illusion that it's her. It's hard to do, but it's a very good exercise to liberate the feelings.

-- I can't do it. I'd be easier if Mariann were here. Then I could really let loose my thousand jaguars (laughs).

-- I'm like you; I also get locked into myself when I have problems with Jenny, but with me the main thing is my guilt feelings. I always blame myself and this is harmful to me. Another thing is that as men we have been taught to not show our emotions. We have to get tough, keep our feelings in; you know the syndrome. But all those feelings interrupt your ability to think. The other day Roberto said that women in a way are more intelligent than men because when something happens to them they cry and throw out their emotions. And we try to will ourselves to continue thinking, but what happens is that we consume a lot of energy in trying to repress our emotions, instead of just letting them out from the very beginning.

-- Hummmmm.

-- What are you thinking about?

-- I was thinking that I'd like to drive this fist through Mariann's mouth (laughing).

-- (Laughs) Maybe break a few teeth. Go ahead, this is Mariann with her punk haircut.

-- No really, I can't, it's not the real thing.

-- I know (laughs), but it's still Mariann's face with her punk haircut.

-- (Laughs) I can't do it, brother. I can't even make love to her. Ok, I've finished, my time's up.

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5. Talking to the Río Grande

I always come back to you, my source, you gnarled piece of liquid leather. When I feel good or lousy you're always there for me. Only you can listen to the outpourings of my soul, remain calm and understand me. In Laredo, as a child I knew you as the powerful, indifferent divider of a people that were once one and the same, and yet now on one side they are known as mexicanos, and we, on the other side, tejanos. You flowed on doing your thing, not caring about the weird games men play. I swam in you and your dark waters mixed with my creative blood. Whenever I go I try to stick close to you cause I developed this need to reveal myself to you so that I can cope with all the hangups. Listen to me once again, old one, and tell me the way to do it.

Funny that I'm so close to Barelás Bridge, yet I can't hear the traffic, and funny how nobody ever comes down here except a few winos. They know where the power is.

Strange how here in Albuquerque I can cross you without getting my knees wet, but in Laredo, no way. I bring my children to you so they can know you and we make drawings of Aztec suns and Zuni katchinas on your soft sands. And I tell them that here on either side of you it's the same neighborhood, the same people, and I don't need identification papers. Ahhh, that makes me feel so damn good. And you could care less as you carry on through Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico; your mission is to just flow on.

And how many poems have I written while sitting in you? And now again I need your strength so that I can see clearly.

Damn it! I wish I could cry. I wanted to ask Andrés to just help me cry when we co-counseled last night, but I couldn't bring myself to verbalize the feeling. Too damn proud, I'm not queer, men don't cry. I should've asked him to help me cry, instead of hitting the pillow. When was the last time I cried? When Papá was hitting Mamá and I rushed at him and grabbed him from behind in a headlock. Yes, I

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was so scared and I cried while I held him, and I kept saying stop it Papá, don't hit her please stop it.

I could really fill you up with my tears right now.

I should be working, going around begging for food for the food bank, but right now it's my soul that needs the food of wisdom. Old river, please let me see clearly and do what's right.

I dumped too much on Mariann in the counseling session. She's been through a lot living with me. All my years of political activism for the movement when I wasn't around for her affected her profoundly. She had to stop growing so I could do my thing, but yet it wasn't my thing. The movement was something for all our people, an assertion to be ourselves with pride. It was so difficult to explain, and something in her refused to truly accept it, and so she didn't quite fit among Chicanos. And how will my children find their space among their Chicano brothers and sisters, especially Ixla who looks even more Nordic than Mariann. And I've always been such a poor provider. God, the dumps we've always lived in, yet not having much has ever bothered Mariann. Mariann, I remember when a long time ago I told her that her hair was as long as you, that if she got into your waters up in the mountains of Colorado, the ends of her hair would stick out into the Gulf of Mexico. She liked that, but she doesn't like my possessiveness. She feels she can't be herself, the one she's trying to rediscover, being close to me. She says I won't allow her to blossom, that I'm too jealous and possessive. The children are too demanding at this point in her life. She needs breathing space and friends that support her need to be herself. She needs to live alone again is what she said this morning. Well, get out, go, as a matter of fact why don't you go back to Minnesota where you belong, or even better, go back to your old Norway. This is Aztlán and you don't belong here. God, I was so angry.

Why do I flip over and feel so threatened when she talks about living a life apart from me? Because I'm a traditional man, because I love her and want her by my side, because she's mine. But she's not my property and if she doesn't want to be with me, she can certainly choose to live by herself or another man. But that's too painful to me. I've changed, I've done a lot of things to accommodate her feelings, but it's never enough, and now she needs to be herself, alone. Well, what is yourself? That is her strength, she says, to find out. Well, where does that leave

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me and our relationship? That's uncertain. I can't deal with uncertainty, it's got to be spelled out. Things on her kind of journey are difficult to define, she said, but she still loves me and whether I believe it or not, I will always be in her heart. What a lying laugh, you're just dishing me out a fucking little ugly cliché. I'm afraid of you, I can't trust you anymore, she said, and cried.

Can you understand my situation. She is the mother of my children and we've shared so much and yet I know she's not my property. Intellectually I've known it all along, but with my body I was her right here by my side. "You want to own her like you own the scissors to trim your moustache." Maybe that's what Ramón Tijerina, the old barrio philosopher would have said to me. "Yes, your sensualismo is seeing your wife as your property, qué no?"

Ok Ramón, I understand now. But how do I deal with it. Old river, how can I reject with my body this thing of wanting to own her? How? I'd have to die and be reborn. If I were a rattlesnake and could change skins I'd be renewed. I'd be young again with a glistening new skin. I'd drink your waters with a new soul. Maybe then I wouldn't have the obsession of wanting to own her. Maybe I'd even be able to forgive my father. To be renewed, but first I'd have to die.

I almost died once, remember? At least it felt that way. Yes, I was in junior high, and my friends from school and I played hookey, and I took them in my old car to the family ranch. Man, did we have fun. And then I showed them something special, the uncompleted well, so deep and mysterious. I remember my cousins Kiko and Pepe digging it years before, and I was so afraid of it. Then all my friends were right up to the rim of the well, and they saw some snakes down there, and they got all excited. They had two 22-caliber rifles and they wanted to shoot the snakes, and I said no, they're black snakes, harmless. They're down there probably because of the rats living in the well. But they were too excited and they started shooting. Then they said somebody had to go down the ladder to get the snakes, and nobody volunteered. They were scared of going down, but then I remember someone yelling that I should volunteer cause after all, it was my family's well and I was used to those kinds of things, and they started pushing me and calling me queer, chicken shit and scarey-hole. My heart started jumping all over the place, but I decided to go down anyway. I'd show them my ding-dong was bigger than all of their's put together. I started the downward journey and it felt warm, with a tightness then a release, as if the well was pulsating, and it was dark, but I could

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still see the bottom. The snakes were dead, probably killed twenty times over. I went lower, focusing on the snakes. It felt cool now and exhilarating. Then I felt movements all around me, and I realized that the dark walls on the well were moving. There were thousands of crickets living there. The shooting had agitated them. I held still and looked at them, but then my friends started yelling at me to go down, that I was a fucking coward and a gutless pig, and I felt so alone and scared, and now all the crickets were moving around. My foot slipped and I almost fell. With one hand I braced myself against the wall of the well, and when I did that the crickets got more excited, and they started chirping, first a few chirping softly, then more. I had my balance now, then more crickets were chirping, louder, my heart still going wild, then it seems like all the crickets in the well were doing their song. I couldn't hear my friends yelling obscenities at me anymore. The song of the crickets kept coming into me, filling up my mind. I could feel it now entering every part of me. My heart thumped in rhythm with the cricket song. I felt my face smiling, yes, I was so happy, and then that's all there was in the world, me and the crickets' song that had become one.

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Crickets In My Mind is a collaborative effort constructed with the spirit of Rasquachimo – that is it was constructed using materials on hand or that were donated and now I wish to acknowledge those who contributed to the book. The hair used to bind the book was collected from horses on the Navajo Reservation owned by Paul Denetclaw and from the Abeyta Rancho near Las Vegas, New Mexico. The cover constructed from handmade human hair donated by Veronica Angel, Vanessa, Lucianna and myself. Tear offs from the inside pages were recycled into the paper pulp which was used to make the Handmade paper. The inside pages were printed on Japanese Rice Paper, Arches 88, Rives Gray, Amate and Fabriano. Two printing processes (photo-lithography and photo-seriography) were used to print the book. I wish to thank Lydia Madrid & Cecilio Garcia-Camarillo for their guidance and support. Delilah -92-

Crickets In My Mind is a literary collage of life's odds and ends that covers a 10 year period. It consists of a condensed interview I published years ago in Caracol, a recalled conversation with an old traveler, a letter to a friend that was never mailed, a recorded counselling session, and a fragment of my never-ending dialogue with the Río Grande. Throughout the pieces I reveal the struggle and eventual disintegration of my 10 year relationship with Mia. Experimental in nature and reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, *Crickets*, I think, captures a portion of man's fragmentation, the illusion of love, the impermanence of ideals and the continuous flow of human existence. Cecilio '92