

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Daniel Romo: Poems That Kiss and Dwell

Daniel Romo · Wednesday, February 5th, 2014

Poet Daniel Romo recently answered the question, What made you start writing poetry? “I watched Def Poetry Jam,” he said. “The performing of words was something new to me. It was both exciting and vital. I became inspired to write, myself. My first poems started out as “spoken word.” From there, I started attending open mics, reading poetry, going a different route from spoken word, and here I am.”

We are proud to present these three poems by Daniel Romo.

FRENCH KISS

I stepped outside and crisp air mixed with my face like aftershave,
despite the painted bramble of my infant beard. It never rains in L.A.,
but the Hispanic weathergirl with a waist like drizzle flowing into
hips like downpour mouthed words like: wet, positioning itself, down South,
forecasting that my bike ride to work this morning would be an adventure.
I flung my satchel over my back, rolled up my pant leg, and pedaled away.
Violent wind ruffled my hair, berating me for not wearing a helmet.
Roly-poly raindrops bathed my body, transforming my track jacket and jeans
into an Old Navy wetsuit. My tires struggled to hug the road, more like river
of Mother Nature’s bitter spermicide. Better to be a nomad trekking the Sahara—
searching for the next oasis, a newlywed barreling down Niagara Falls,
or an eager out of shape tourist trudging up the Eiffel Tower determined
to reach the zenith for a postcard view of the Mediterranean. Summer couldn’t
come fast enough I thought, as I slogged down the boulevard. Season when
the busty beauty’s forecast calls for *hot nights*, *warm fronts*, and *rising mercury*,
spicy syllables lingering on the tip of her Spanish tongue, like French kisses in July.

EXCAVATION THEORY

Tell me about the part when we chalked X’s on our limbs—
dissected the delicate hinges of our anatomy
in the name of Science.

My lines were straight,
 unwavering archeological sites
 certain of the reward.

Yours: fragmented, mostly
 virgin theories
 of expedition afraid to go all the way.

But the blade sliced through your bones
 as if rescuing the marrow from the clutches of calcium.

The nerves proved more difficult.
 Their fibers sewn together:
 a militia of strong-armed filaments.

I stopped short of cutting out your heart.
 You called me “chicken”
 asking, Where is the *celebrated sonata*?
The bloody concerto?

You called me “Balk.”
 I didn’t correct you.

HOW TO DO YOUR MAKEUP LIKE A CHOLA

I.

Start with the foundation. Because a steady one has never existed in her life, this part is easy. Apply a base ready to handle any bumps in the road that may occur in the future, such as: welts from slaps in the face in the form of stereotyping before she even has a chance to grow up. A good foundation can conceal any hardships you’re bound to endure in the future.

II.

Apply the blush. Brush it on in a manner maximizing the sharpness of the cheekbones highlighting the refinement of the face: exotic, brilliant, like ancestral Mayan carvings. Avoid using too much, as this will give people the wrong impression: clown, slut.

III.

Use the pencil to shape your eyebrows thin and arched. This will create an exaggerated look of bewilderment which may come in handy should you ever decide to visit the most upscale department store in the mall. You can actually look the part, rather than just play dumb, when the saleswomen follow you around as if you stole some sparkly earrings and shoved them into your purse (also presumed stolen). The scarce hairs (mostly drawn on) will also serve as a barrier to people looking in your eyes, easing any guilt you may have for sins committed that would cause your mother eternal grief.

IV.

Put on the eye shadow base before the eye shadow so the shadow

will set better. Use a shimmery silver to compliment the golden crucifix hiding deep in the cleavage peering out from the fitted white tank top. Then blend in the eye shadow on your crease to create depth. Otherwise you'll be seen as shallow, incapable of accomplishing anything meaningful in life (Being a teenage mother doesn't count as an accomplishment.).

V.

Guide the eyeliner across the fringes of the upper lid, slowly advancing all around the eye. Repeat the process, the thicker the better. Don't neglect the corners—where the liner should harshly extend pointing away from the pupils as if accusing the ears of betraying the rest of the face.

VI.

Curl the lashes. Perfecting the art of eye-batting is vital. You'll need to use your sexuality like a lasso, roping potential suitors (most likely Cholos) who will show everyone how much they care by giving you an assortment of hickies on your neck like a raunchy connect the dots, and in turn get your name tatted in cursive on his neck, forever displaying the bond you share. Because why waste money on a ring of any sort when nothing says I love you heina more than a neck tattoo.

VII.

The mascara should coat the lashes like an oversized Pendleton. Drape it on as if protecting the eyes from any sort of illumination that forces the Chola to examine her current lifestyle. She doesn't need to be reminded that being a mother is more than making sure Jr. has the freshest baby shoes. That dropping out of high school maybe wasn't the best move. Or that picking and choosing your battles will give you and your loved ones a longer life span. Because in this *mi vida loca* world of *barrios* and bandanas, it's all about respect, and every day is a battle.

VIII.

Finally, trace the lips with lip liner. Lipstick isn't needed. It would only rub off from your kiss my ass *FTW* attitude. But the liner will still be there. The last trace of any hope you'll have at making something out of yourself.

'French Kiss' was originally published in Pear Noir. 'Excavation Theory' was originally published in The Commonline Journal. 'How To Do Your Makeup Like a Chola' was originally published in The Acentos Review.

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