

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Gabriel Lopez: Two Poems

Gabriel Lopez · Wednesday, October 26th, 2022

Two Poems by Gabriel Lopez

torch and compass

we are the children born of machinery
housed in the shadows of
concrete goliaths.
strobe street lights
dimly light a path
never walked
down dark, vacant
streets that bend and curl
into oblivion.

“ni de aquí, ni de allá.”

a language borrowed,
taught to me by hope and faith
and dreams,
but lost in translation.

i am a product
of my parent's sacrifice,
who traversed cracked, orange
landscapes and
empty highways
in junk cars
and torn sneakers
to make it here.

a sacrifice,
but at what cost?
i am an alien.
alien to my parents and their land;

the green, fertile pastures they describe
 to me
 in passing. somewhere with cleaner air,
 with people you
 recognize.
 but that is not MY
 home.
 alien to this country
 that sees me as
 a color,
 a dropout,
 a laborer,
 a welfare check,
 a murderer,
 a rapist.
 born and raised
 in the rotting carcass
 of long dead
 industries.
 caged in regimented barracks;
 cement blocks where we're
 stocked up like chickens in a pen.
 men's
 lives worth
 \$10 and 50 cents.

so what am i?
 one of many of this lost generation
 with only the sweat, blood, and tears of our parents to guide us.
 what we needed was a torch and compass
 to illuminate the path.

our story is one
 written in a different hand and pen,

onto entirely different paper,
 with an uncertain
 end.

*

a game of uno

meeting him as a kid,
 cold and indifferent,
 but mostly scared and confused,
 i took him under my wing:
 isaac.

dull dead eyes,
gray skin dotted with red sores,
and a murmur barely recognizable
as speech.
neither living
nor dead.

bony hands eager to feel,
tired feet eager to move,
he was driven by
a thirst for adventure
he never satisfied.

i was an asshole then,
angry and reckless.
we were salt and snail,
and it was evident that
he despised me.
but

we were both alone.
we were both lost.

countless fights,
bickering and insults without end.
drinking and smoking,
a game of uno
driving down the street on a moped,
yelling and laughing our lungs dry.
making moves on the young girls,
desperate for pussy
and ecstasy.

getting laid and bragging to me about it,
using his head and thinking the
unimaginable.

a brilliant mind
inside
such an
unattractive
face.

but the good times were not enough.
we grew apart.
i'll never forget
you beating the shit out
of me
after i suggested

i have sex with your girlfriend.

that, and the time you gave
me a home,
as i staggered through
the streets disoriented.
freshly carved, self inflicted
scars etched on my body.
losing myself.

you offered me a home.

and a game of uno.

that's the most anyone ever did for me.

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