Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Rafaella Daumas: Two Poems

Rafaella Daumas · Thursday, April 13th, 2023

Yes, I Am Latina. And No, I Am Not Mexican

After Patricia Smith's "Skinhead"

They call me beaner, and I'm not Mexican.
Those screaming, broken letters,
Thrown at me in anger,
And I didn't even know what it meant.
So I laughed it off.
I look at my skin and I'm not brown,
I'm not caramel, or toffee, or *dulce de leche*.
I am a pale, pale white.
My veins, blue and green and purple,
Visible spiderwebs up my arms.
Am I Latina enough?

The face that moves in my mirror is pale and pink from the cold,
Button-nosed, freckled, green-brown eyes and thin lips.
I speak and no accent comes out.
"Notifications" and "cookies" give me away.
And then the looks come forth.
The fetishizing and the disgust and the curiosity.
Like I'm a white-passing zoo animal.
And yes, I speak Spanish.
And yes, I am Latina.
And no, I am not Mexican.

I sit here and I watch the news.
"Mexicans are stealing our jobs."
"Illegals jump the wall and
Steal our women and our money."
I sit here and the jokes begin.
"Oh, right! You're an illegal!"
"I'll get you deported. Ha, ha."
I sit here and I laugh into the night.
I was born Latina enough.

It’s easy now to pretend I don’t care,
To hide my accent and blend,
To weave in and out of the stereotypes,
The images that are thrown at me,
Accusing me of not fitting into them,
Celebrating when I do.
As if I was made entirely for their entertainment.

I look in the mirror and see me
Crying over another job saying “NO,”
Screaming at my visa,
Ripping up the paperwork.
And I know I shouldn’t,
But I raise the finger anyways,
Because this should not be so goddamned hard.
And I am not another curiosity to be stared at.
And I am not just another stereotype.
And yes, I speak Spanish.
And yes, I am Latina.

And yes, I am goddamned fuckin’ beautiful:

The hoops, the curves, the accent, the crazy.

I was born Latina enough,

And I am NOT Mexican.

*

& even women teach their sons to say “your body, *my* choice”

After Danez Smith’s “& even the black guy’s profile reads ‘sorry, no black guys’”

imagine a rose, upon seeing a garden
full of roses, cuts others’ stems in
self-righteousness, prays some gardener will choose
them instead. imagine

a terrified pregnant girl, fear as if death
Himself was looming closer with the broken
coat hanger. she looks in the mirror and sees
that broken pregnant girl fading into her shadows.
she turns from the memory with a painted smile,
looking down at her little boy,
promising him the world
and neglecting hers.

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