Cultural Daily

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Marcia Alesan Dawkins: Thank You, Grandpa, Rafael Matos, Sr., for This Poem

Marcia Alesan Dawkins · Wednesday, November 23rd, 2011

Grandpa, your work reminds me that there is so much for which to be thankful even if we can't see it. For the world around us and the beauty that thrives in the face of ugliness. For the fact that we are empowered even though so much that happens to us really is out of our control. For both the gentle breeze that ushers in peace and the violent gale that takes it away. For the way it feels to know that you remain one of my "invisible forces" even though you are no longer here.

FUERZAS INVISIBLES
escrito por Rafael Matos, Sr. (1910-2008)

Siempre voy contemplando cuando paso sin prisa
el ramaje del monte que alborotan los vientos
de los árboles chicos y de los curpulentos,
para ver luego, en calma, que lo peina la brisa.

Cual caudal de emociones de fuerza y de calma
se combinan al paso de leyes que imperan;
tal sucede a los hombres, y los cambios se operan
cuando calma o tormenta le revuelven el alma.

¿Puede acaso el mortal evitar que lo invadan,
o cerrarle la puerta a sus propias pasiones?
¿No vivir, no soñar, no tener ilusiones?
Si no puede, es a causa de porqué lo anonadan.

Nunca el monte ha podido evitar la tormenta,
ni la brisa, la lluvia, ni los rayos del sol.
Así el hombe no puede evitar ni el amor,
ni sentir los deseos que el amar alimenta.

Ojalá si tormentas ya no roban la calma
y nos llevan cuas hojas arrastradas al viento
por la senda del fiero y tenaz sufrimiento,
también venga la brisa a peinarnos el alma.

INVISIBLE FORCES

written by Rafael Matos, Sr. (1910-2008), translated by Marcia Alesan Dawkins

When I’m walking slowly I always admire
the branches that the wind unsettles
from the smallest trees to the strongest,
to see later, calmly, what the wind has combed.

Like a flash of emotions, strength and calm
combine according to the laws that prevail;
and so it is with human beings, and with the changes that happen when peace or torment stir the soul.

Can mortals avoid being invaded or do they close the doors to their own passions?
Not to live, not to dream, not to have illusions?
If they can’t, it’s because they’ve been overwhelmed.

The mountain has never been able to avoid the storm,
or the breeze, the rain or the sun’s rays.
Similarly, humankind can neither avoid love,
nor feeling the dreams that love nourishes.

And hopefully if the storms are already stealing our calm and taking us like leaves tossed in the wind
down the path of ferocious and tenacious suffering,
the gentle breeze will also come and refresh the soul.

The poem above was originally published in the book A Los Cuatro Vientos (Miami: Editorial Caribe, 1987).

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