

Centro de Detención Tejano

Miss White

Días de cuarenta y ocho horas
Mese de sesenta días
Ya fue mucha la demora
Y siempre las mismas melodías...

Memorias incontables
De experiencias inolvidables;
Hositorias increíbles
De comidas incomedibles.

Para cada cosa un Horario
Ya no me importa el calendario;
Pienso tanto a diario
Que vivo en un mundo imaginario...

Personajes de caravanas!
Mmm... los cuentos de las cubanas...
Algunas cuantas mexicanas
Cientos de centroamericanas.

Silencios que dicen mucho
Palabras que no dicen nada;
Resoviendo nuestros problemas
A través de una llamada...

Un cielo abierto
En un lugar desierto;
Detrás de estas rejas,
Solo escucharas quejas...

Un sueño que todas soñamos,
Llegar a suelo Americano,
Pero lo que no imaginamos;
Un centro de Detención Tejano.

Tantas historias de Amor!!
Cuantos cuentos de terror...
Visitas al doctor
A ver si el, cura este dolor.

Esperando el correo
Por si hay cartas de Romero.
Aquí hay unas cuantas Julietas!
Ah! Y un par de chicas con muletas...

Tengo un sueño embotellado
En este lugar enjaulado;
Ojala este Juez no diga:
"Usted debe ser deportado.

Nos vamo a al comedor
Con nuestro estomago soñador,
Y el hambre se nos quita
Cuando hablamos con el deportador.

A mi Neighbourhood e soportdo
Pues toda la noche ha roncado
Sus sonidos se han combinado
Con el aeropuerto que esta al lado...

Si quieres venir de "Mojado"
Pues tienes que estar preparado
Si te agarran los verdes...
Vas a estar un rato encarcelado!

Nunca digas que eres un emigrante

Texas Detention Center

By Miss White (pseudonym)

Days of forty-eight hours
Months of sixty days
Already the wait's been great, the detention long
And always the same songs...

Untellable memories
Of unforgettable experiences;
Stories incredible
Of meals inedible.

For each thing a Schedule
No longer do I bother myself with the calendar;
I think so much every day
That I live in a fictional world...

People in caravans!
Hmmm...the stories of the Cubans...
Some Mexican stories
Hundreds of Central American ones.

Silences that say so much
Words that say nothing;
Resolving our problems
By means of a phone call...

An open sky
In a desert land;
Behind these bars,
Only suffering can be heard...

A dream we all dream,
To arrive on American soil,
But what we did not imagine,
a Texas Detention center.

So many stories of Love!!
How many stories of terror...
Trips to the doctor
To see if he, can heal this hurt.

Waiting for the mail
In case there are letters from Romeo.
Here there are quite a few Juliettes!
Oh! A a few chicks on crutches.

I have a bottled up dream
In this caged up place;
Hopefully the Judge won't say:
"You should be deported"

We go to the cafeteria
With our stomachs growling
And the hunger vanishes
When we speak with the deporter.

My "Neighborhood" I've put up with
While they snore all night long
The sounds have blended with
The airport next door...

If you want to come "Wet"
Well you need to be prepared
If the greens grab you...
You'll for a while be incarcerated!

Never say you're an immigrant

Translator's Notes:

- In Spanish, each stanza includes rhyming of variable sequences most notably in stanza 9 with the first and fourth lines (letras and muletas).
- The first two lines of the second stanza show considerable awareness of the nature of trauma and mutism.
- In the final stanza, the word "wet" refers to those who cross the border between Mexico and the U.S. through the Rio Grande. The word green refers to the uniforms of U.S. border patrol agents.
- The capitalization in the third stanza may refer to the emphasis given to the structure of time and place (the physical structure of the detention center) and the de-emphasis on the structures' habitability for human beings.

Translator: Natty Plunkett

I started corresponding with "Miss White" in mid-March 2020, when she was incarcerated in El Paso Processing Center. She was recently moved to Broward Transitional Facility in Pompano Beach Florida and we lost communication for a while. She fled the tyranny of Cuba to request asylum in the US only to be thrown in jail when she arrived. She uses the pseudonym Miss White to avoid possible retaliation by the prison staff. Like so many, she can't understand why she and others are being treated like criminals. In my letters, I have to apologize how my country is treating her.

Bill Everett, October, 2020