

Elements from: The caste system of a schizophrenic nation or how I learned to tango in Chile
(Santiago de Chile 2009-11 multimedia for voice music film & image)

Someone tried to steal my mantra
Santiago de Chile a city where mantras
sell like trinkets, good luck charms
they nail them on walls
above beds
in homes alongside their crucifix
a collective guilt of bad dreams
and it is said if you sleep beneath the mantra
of a stranger it can purge the dream you are haunted by,
the dream is the past
each one the dreamer each one a suspect
the officer the priest a man a woman
each inexplicably tied to the other,
snakes woven in dark tapestries of ever shifting lies.
An officer rapes then tortures the child
that was taken in the night
he bows his head as he receives
the body of Christ
from the hands of a priest
at Sunday mass where many officers
are blessed and consume
their allotted portion of flesh.
The priest is not a fool
he knows his congregation
he knows their sin
but like all good Christians,
better a rapist who believes and fears his god
then a socialist without a god
who would help and protect the poor.
The man,

a man dances in his shadow
swirls and reaches out
the only thing preventing him from falling
into his other-self is the lamp post he holds to
but the drunk is much too smart ever
to allow and so staggers on
disturbing the street dog.
Drunks and abandon dogs
have their own special ritual
the man feels he must befriend
the dog protect,
they also dance
but a sober dog and a staggering drunk
make for a very aggressive dance;
the dog barks
the drunk laughs,
eighty percent of the dogs' dance is territorial
for the drunk it's just another distraction
in a long list of distractions
on his way to the woman who gave birth to the child
that was taken in the night.
The woman,
a woman waits
nervously peeling new skin from old wounds,
wounds she must never allow to heal,
yesterday and the day before
lie buried beneath today's newly applied makeup
her lines and wrinkles covered in a thick coat
of impenetrable plaster.
She is waiting for the man who fathered the child
that was taken in the night.

Elements from: The caste system of a schizophrenic nation or how I learned to tango in Chile
(Santiago de Chile 2009-11 multimedia for voice music film & image)

Here each is the enemy of the other
tails you lose heads they win,
you see it's the duality of the dream
that made a generation stained in hate
but not all priests were fascists
not all officers murderers
and not all mantras will heal such wounds.

(prelude)

Is she in a quiet corner
or has she a quiet corner
in which to hide
or is there a quiet corner
in her where she is hiding from,
hidden
in a quiet corner away from
in her quiet corner she silently hides.

See this one? This one, over there
the one sitting quietly in the corner
she was the lover of my brother.

It's always memories
memories that scatter they all scatter
scatter like silverfish on brightly lit floors
ten thousand directions they go-
Re-incarnate
all these freshly minted
brightly colored things-
right here... inside this head.

And nothing is ever as it should have been
what these eyes have seen the things they remember,
my younger brother Carlos
nosotros eramos los estudiantes,
(we were the students)
he was always for the left, Me?
I was always on the right,
see this hand...
well he was this other,
we were always

Elements from: The caste system of a schizophrenic nation or how I learned to tango in Chile
(Santiago de Chile 2009-11 multimedia for voice music film & image)

always the same hands together.

Fighting over the passion drink till dawn
embracing and crying over our innocence
then we'd all embrace, everyone in this bar
would embrace

we sang and shouted loyalties

till the havens' came down...

and only to drink even more.

But then the others came

los estadounidenses

(the American)

they came

they came to make each/

enemy of other.

Carlos was one of the first

to let go of life

la Caravana de la Muerte

(the caravan of death)

they took him, they took him

sending all my cells into dying.

And still I remember... things- these things,

these things I remember,

things that once made life...

Carlos was life.

My life, Carlos was my life worth living.

In Chile we tax books
the way you tax cigarettes and alcohol
books being a dangerous thing
in the hands of the masses,
you wouldn't give alcohol to a child
so why then books?

Besides books create desire
they create awareness,
they necessitate change,
change un-sanctioned by the very people
who struggled so hard to create
an even and just society.

Books are the unessential commodity
and each person pre-designed to a destiny.

Think about it:

The church only lost its dignity when the bible was
mass produced
where any commoner could eat his eggs and bacon
while reading its sacred text.

Better a priest should read in Latin,
better a person show reverence
and healthy understanding.

Besides-

why then should we have built so many churches?

The past... An empty sound
it reddens the eyes and blurs
our lives,
it hides in their dreams
and Sunday mass,
between
homily and benediction
between the hello and goodbye
the bear this cross
which God has granted
through his holy roman catholic church.
They are not the author of silence
only the keeper of secrets,
secrets they hide in silent prayer
but silence cannot clothe
nor feed the poor, it cannot pay our rent
dream our dreams
or give us the hope to our future.
It condemns! It brings fear, it never forgets
it is only a disease of the very old
an infestation of withering
memories grafted to
a post totalitarian phobic
syndrome of stagnant aroma,
aromas they would have us inhale forever.

Elements from: The caste system of a schizophrenic nation or how I learned to tango in Chile
(Santiago de Chile 2009-11 multimedia for voice music film & image)

(prelude)

Old man

gentle man

carrying memories

shrouded

in crumpled cellophane.

Old man

dead man

shuffling along

in

transient reflection

between shop windows

and the dark behind the eyes.

Old man

lost man

remembering

death camps and carousels

of self-creating mythologies

half truths and uncompleted lies,

the un-redemptive prayer

small and circular

a kind of self-indulgent transubstantiation.

An old man

a sad and tired man

just walking in secrets

on a city street in early September

I saw a man he had the eyes of the torturer

his wife those of the terrified

both faces creviced, deep lines crisscross

mirrored

Elements from: The caste system of a schizophrenic nation or how I learned to tango in Chile
(Santiago de Chile 2009-11 multimedia for voice music film & image)

expression of desperation on peripheral of truth,
an assimilation into mutual shadow-less silence.

Now! Dinning in a crowded restaurant

In Chile there is no truth

Los desaparecido

to get to justice you must first get truth,

this wealth that was submerged in blood of innocent

now to the 3rd generation flows freely without remorse

on the streets and in the homes of Las Condes

I have learnt to distrust such wealth both in the very old and the very young.

There is an enigmatic coating of civility entrenched to this culture

a bureaucracy of ever shifting lies

the ethos of a dysfunctional nation.

Winter shimmer off morning sun

reflective prism

distort image marginalization and poverty,

a kaleidoscopic metaphor reaches out shattering the many

transparent layers of intolerance.

And they wait

and they dream

and they plan.

I now think I see outlines of weapons in shadows.