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# 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

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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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