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They tried to stop her at the border

Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés | Apr. 28, 2009 El Rio Debajo del Rio

They tried to stop her at the border
No visa for her kind, you know...
undocumented, some were certain.
Border guards, La migra, didn?t like the looks of
her. No one cared that
her many, many relatives were waiting for her
back home in Santa Fe USA, and
in surrounding little villages with names like
La Cienega, over near Chupadero, and Española.

Her so many relatives, holding babies in their arms,
were praying daily, nightly, for her safe travel and especially
for her clear passage at the border.

Her familia already had all their kisses ready on their lips,
just to give to her.
They had prepared the special water to ritually cleanse her
for having made the perilous journey successfully.

But fate would not have it, their prayers were not answered.
Stopped at the border; the frontier guards swarmed the truck,
their reasons now seeming so clear,
for her girth alone, was so great...
a peasant woman, not a svelte city woman,
she was just a campesina girl grown up ...
and now pregnant, so far bigger than usual.

And just trying to make her way over the border...
carrying, as las parteras, the midwives, say, ?way out front.?
She could hardly be expected, being with child and all,
To fold herself into a woman
The size of a gnat.

So, no, she stood out, that belly in certain lights, you know,
looking quite suspicious and all.
Clearly she was from one of the oldest villages.
One could tell by her odd clothes and bare feet.
Why would such as she be wanting to come to the US?

So Immigration and Customs nabbed her.
And the truck driver who was bringing her,
slipped away.
And Customs interrogated, wanting to see papers:
Papers and papers and more papers yet. And money too.
But she was not carrying even la ret'cula, a small purse,
and did not have even coinage, so she could only answer
with the priceless look in her beautiful eyes.

They took her then, to where all suspicious people are taken,
to warehouse in holding cells; and there alone on the cold floor
she laid her head.
And they put their hands inside her maternity clothes,
certain she was carrying contraband.
?What about that belly, real or fake?
Maybe filled with cocaine probably...
Ah these people will try any trick to bring in drugs.?
And so they forced her to be x-rayed, just to make sure.

And after, she just looked through the fence of the cage
they?d put her in.
Would someone, anyone, come
and free her?

No one came.

The next day.

No one came.

The next day.

She was lost.

But not forgotten.

Despair back in the villages in the USA.
How lonesome they all were for their jailed relative, for since forever in what was once Mexico, now the US, la familia had grown to thousands -- blood, not blood -- thousands of aunts, uncles, comadres, compadres, cousins -- especially cousins -- mamis, papis, aubuelos, abuelitas, neighbors, everyone who traded tomato plants with each other, friends, everyone who cultivated gardens amidst the chamisa and scrub piñon across the Santa Fe hills, all had become family by virtue of food and Faith.

Now this huge group of ?families within a Family,? prayed and prayed hoping to hear word of her whereabouts, praying to see maybe even an old Mexican truck with the little religious flags and red chenille berries waving across the truck?s headliner ... how such would come chugging across the border, tilting sideways with the effort, carrying her home to her people up north....

Everyone there waited.
Many wept for her being lost.

And the pregnant mother waited in jail.
And waited...
having committed the crime of trying to come
across a line
that someone claimed was holy ...
a line drawn in the sand
along the banks of the Rio Grande
by less than ten men, long ago.

The pregnant mother waited in her jail.
And waited.

Meanwhile, at the border, men and women swarmed, waved papers around, phone calls flew through the magic wires. A holy man was called in to do the things holy men do, to negotiate the young mother?s release from the holding tank. To bring her home to her people.

And it was done. Somehow the grim blood and the prayer sent out over the Sangre de Cristo and the Sandia mountains, the appearance of gentle yet fierce souls at the border, led to her release.

And now, allowed to go free, she was brought the rest of the way, in a big red truck from the US, fittingly called by its manufacturer, El ariete, The Ram. And you have rarely seen such rejoicing, teenagers holding camera phones high, elders weeping, those scarred by life, weeping and laughing, children bedecking with flowers...

As she came from the truck, she was gentled and soothed and
Kissed and touched as though souls had at last met Soulmate; singing broke out, the old hymns...

as la familia extraordinaire, were reunited once again...
From dream to reality, she had made it across the border...
on the same trail that all ancestors journeyed upon long ago...
La Nuestra Señora Guadalupe, with our Cristocito in her belly,
Had made it to her people, to all souls who hold a place for her

And her little Son, ?the radiant contraband Baby? that is invisible only to those who have not yet the eyes to see, the ears to hear ... invisible even to x-ray machines ... at last He and she were here, safe in the arms and eyes and hearts who love, those who have always loved La Conquista, Mother of the Conquered, Mother of the Americas who ever comes bearing her Precious Cargo.

And to at least one old pilgrim in Santa Fe who could hear La Señora Guadalupe?s words without her saying them aloud, she whispered that she was touched by the people?s fears and their great love, but she was never really lost. Just had work to do ... at the border ... in the warehouse

... maybe with one of the poor old men who swept the floors, maybe with one of the young who came to graffiti a wall, maybe with an official who remembered the generous heart again, maybe with a young mother who didn?t know if she could make it, but seeing our Lady behind the fence, felt filled with bold grace and knew she could make it after all. A momentary pause. Not a lifetime peril. Our Lady, on the way home, stopped for a bit, for she had business at the border.

CODA
Several years ago, the padrecito of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish [Shrine] in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, Father Tien-Tri Nguyen, along with deacons, parishioners and many people on both sides of the border, began

seeking an artist to fulfill a vision... to create a living statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The comadres and compadres were literally overjoyed to find the sculptor La Señora Georgina Farias in Mexico, a tiny woman about five feet tall, and in her 60s, who would create the heroic-sized statue of bronze. The beautiful statue is twelve feet tall and weighs about two tons.

The statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe was indeed confiscated at the border on its way from Mexico to the US, but not allowed the usual Customs detainment of a day or two, but rather she, seeming suspicious somehow -- at least to authorities -- was carried off the truck, all 4000+/- pounds of her, and taken to a warehouse, and her whereabouts were unknown for many days. She was indeed x-rayed to make sure she was not carrying contraband.

For several days, the people of faith waiting for her in the US, having already rented buses to drive to the border to greet her, to stay with her, and to bring her home in triumphant procession, were so frightened that they had ?lost? her for good... like many other families on both sides of the border who do not know where their loved ones are, they kept a heart-rending vigil.

Yet, no authority seemed to know where she was. The ?right hand at U.S. Customs? said one thing, and the ?left hand at U.S. Customs? said something different ... as though she had become desaparecido, a missing person.

Yet, anyone knowing the border as we do, knows it sometimes seems the Tower of Babel must have been built right on the banks of the Rio Grande, and it seems to come startlingly alive again with disinformation, misinterpretation and downright lack of conveying facts that ought normally be available to any rational being.

So, in order to find Our Lady of Guadalupe and free her, along with his posse of devotees to Our Lady, Fr. Tri, as he is called by his parishioners, journeyed from Santa Fe to the border.

There he and the determined posse (In Latin, posse, means to ?be able?) found persons in Customs who helped, a warehouse door-opener rather than a foot-dragger, and no doubt by the padrecito?s purity of purpose that was poured into him by all the longing and gentleness and fierceness of the parishioners, deacons, candidate deacons, old people, young hearts, middle-aged soulful people, and others who loved Our Lady, they were able to secure her release.

Thus, she was lifted to a great flatbed trailer, secured safely and with the red Ram truck pulling with its strong engine, she came finally along the ancient road into Santa Fe -- literally with police motorcycle escort, and horns blaring from the long lines of cars and trucks in the processional that had formed to bring her home to Agua Fria Street, at last.

And too, just as I said, the people literally wept in joy and gratitude, and most of all, in love, in immaculate love for her, as they touched her, kissed her, sang to her and for her, as the blessed workmen raised her up to her perfect outdoor room they?d prepared for her.... one that lets the clouds, the sun, the moon, and the stars peek in cycles through her open rayos, those rays around her body. This last, a nightly and daily shower of her esteemed symbols over and through her bronze body.

To bring her home...
Let this be the prayer, then, in every heart this May,
the month of La Nuestra Madre, Our Mother.
And let there be a little procession to crown Our Mother,
as in times of eld, let that processioncito be in our hearts
as we celebrate the time of all mothers,
no matter what appearance they take, no matter what form...
let us honor all who carry in their own hearts that which,

no matter whatever else,
remains immaculate in Love for all.

Let her, let us, let all of us be found,
Be freed to be brought home
to a place of Love for one another,
on all sides of every kind of border, at last.

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Special gratitude to heart of Miss Deanne Newman, for calling my attention to Our Lady of Guadalupe parish and statue, where I went to Mass last Sunday late... a place of true refugio, refuge, after having driven four-hundred miles, and in 4-wheel drive through two snowstorms and over a high mountain pass, to fulfill a teaching commitment in Santa Fe. Y mil gracias to mi Estimada Delores Romero at Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine for so generously speaking to me, a stranger, as though I were family tambien.

Too, I hope you will click here to see the photos of Guadalupe?s journey [1] from Mexico to Santa Fe, U.S.A., especially the faces of those who came to accompany her, bless and be blessed by her.... both in Mexico and the US. There were many stops at villages and churches along the way. The photos were taken by Joshua Trujillo, son of the deacon at the parish in Santa Fe. Joshua is a fine photographer. You will also see there?s a book, *Our Lady of Guadalupe, A Journey*.

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Links:
[1] http://www.guadalupejourney.blogspot.com/