EDITORIAL

Their songs belted empty fast-food cups earning a periodic coin or two. A well sung Mexican Romance song could go for a buck or two if a child is healthy enough to strum a guitar or shake a maraca and sing, “Oh how my heart has grown weary from nine months lodging in mother’s womb.”

Many of these prepubescent mariachis are the embodied reminder of a vicious raping. An Indigenous woman travels as far north as she ever will. She finds herself the victim of sexual assault and a budding mother to-boot. What northern lands have her blistered feet taken her to? She arrives like a battered Magellan with her soiled undergarments ripped from her loins under a Tijuana bridge that stretches across the sewers and connects the United States and Mexico’s Revolution Avenue: the street where young girls find their value in becoming whores for American tourists?

There are few, if no, social services or public works programs to protect these particular Mexican children from the cruel realities of earning a living and struggling for survival. Their eyes grow as strong as the husk that

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protects the sweet kernels of corn. Their hearts are more than wounded and demand the raw strength of weathered skin. Song and prostitution are more-often-than-not the only possible hopes for any success in life, as the ruthless evolution of "a heightened awareness of death" grows firmly in these children. Garcia Lorca's *Duende* is sung in the neglected, lonely, broken hearts of these particular Mexican children, who are conceived out of violent acts of poverty and habitual sexual aggression: the vulgar and obvious surrender to the feeling of powerlessness.

The infant oftentimes begins his or her singing lessons while warmly swaddled on mother's back, as she grievously acquiesces to the composition of a drunken predator holding her face down in the sludging sewers of Tijuana's waste. The rapist's eyes are red and green with cactus juice, shifting between the mother's naked ass and the frightened and crying eyes of the baby slung over her shoulders: another potential father asserting his manhood, attempting to prove that he is not without power.

The first notes of music are written in the infant's terrorized heart. And who is more beautiful, more true, and purer than these bastard children, unwanted by the world? Who is more worthy than these children to sing the mysteries of Lorca's *Duende*? For they maintain their spirits and continue to smile through the violence that they personally witness and experience.

Artists are often tastelessly commissioned to make suffering look like sublime scenes that warm the imagination. But these bastard children sing their art for the immediate necessities of life: not for fame or riches but for food and the right to demonstrate that they are deserving of life. They are the "demonic earth spirits who help the artist to see the limitations of intelligence" and the vain and costly pursuit for fame and wealth. They sing songs of *saudade*, but not the *saudade* that looks to the past or the future. Their songs of *saudade* are sung in the immediacy of hope. They are not songs for something that *was* in the past or dreamt for in the future; rather, they sing their songs for something that never was but is ever yearned for.

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