

Juan J. Morales

MANCO INCA'S MIDNIGHT SPEECH

Today when our enemy showed
no fear of gods
or shame when they clapped me
in irons and thrashed my body

No temple or palace or home
remains untouched.
They preach one thing
but do another,
divvying provinces, pilfering
families and wives,
flaming up our souls
to block us from heaven.

Our surrender
would not be just,
so send the messengers, wait
for twenty days
to come when we will surround
Cuzco and strike Lima
in our welcomed nightmare

that destroys our cruel enemy,
who would not be satisfied
if all snow turned
to gold and silver.
We may not overcome
horses, guns,
cannons, but I tell you
we can and will topple
their undying greed.



The bearded ones are shrewd,
so speak few words.
Gather weapons
and comrades, plant the extra
crop rows in remote valleys.
Hum the insurgent's call.

AQC

Revolt of the Underdogs



MANCO INCA SIEGES CUZCO

He kept sentries ready for Spanish raids
and looked into survivors' eyes, mutilated
with scars seared around
eyes and streamed down to exposed chests.
He tended to them and promised
revenge, leaving apologies
in head-shaking rage.

When the first torches touched Cuzco's
rooftops, Manco Inca didn't flinch
at the flickers that rose into swells.
From the hilltop, he watched it devour
homes he knew and jump streets
he once walked, knowing
the enemy felt the roast of
flames in the final palace. He paused

for the thatch's catch and the next moment
when frames would crush under
smoke. Through the gloom,
after pacing away the hours, he saw
his crackling, blistered city,
surrounding the intact refuge
for the Spaniards, brushed
by the blaze and a miracle
he would never understand.