

Aguacero Inside “Agua Que Va Caer”
for Amina Baraka,
and for the living memory of the Young Lords

*“Malo tiempo, yo no quiero
 que me traigan desarreglo,
 en mi soledad, Angel Divino,
 yo no quiero en mi camino la fatalidad...”*

Growin’ up Puertorriqueña/Latina
 White/African/Brown
 In South Bronx, Loisaida,
 El Barrio parts of town

Growin’ up called
 Some slavemaster’s name
 Other people’s typecast
 Strange nicknames

Spic, cuchi-cuchi,
 I-no-speekie-eein-gle
 Pointy-toe-garlic-eatin’
 Banana-boat adjectives

Growin’ up with labels
 Outta someone else’s mouth
 Not me, not mine
 Not definitions of myself

*“Cuando veo el cielo
 Que se ta nublando
 Cuando veo el cielo
 Que se ta nublando
 Agua que va caer...”*

Growin’ up shoppin’ bargains
 That cost you more and more
 Things that fall apart
 Before you get them out the store

Growin’ up eatin’ mayonnaise sandwiches
 Three times a day
 Prayin’ for the hunger
 To please go away

(stanza break)

Cookin' rice and beans ta make that dollar stretch
 Fried eggs over white bread
 Over white ideals doin' full-time factory sweat

Growin' up workin' piece work in Titi Julia's kitchen
 Gluing rhinestones onto jewelry
 At twenty-five cents a piece
 A good day's work about three-fifty each

Early mornin' breakfast breakin' pan
 With café con leche
 Yearnin' for returnin' home
 To rainforest island paradise

It was a family affair that kept us together
 Moliendo masa in between stories
 Lookin' out for one another

Growin' up grinding plátanos into juicy pasteles dreams
 On holidays in between the rice and beans

*“Te juro te va mojar
 Agua que va caer
 Te juro que va caer
 Agua que va caer...”*

Growin' up with Aye Mamacita
 Gimme some today!
 Aye Mamita, let me see you walk away!

Growin' up like good little girls should
 Growin' up always being misunderstood
 Got ta, be hot
 Got ta be salsa-steppin' -mambo-spit-lickin' -hot

Let's play today
 Growin' up, instead—get raped today
 Growin' up with sistas all around
 Gettin' raped by the men they love
 Sistas growin' up and gettin' raped
 By people they loved
 Not cause they deserved it
 Not cause they wanted it or earned it
 Just gettin' raped
 The way our mamas got raped
 The way our ancestors got raped

The way our island gets raped
 By them big hard right political ideals
 By conquerors who know how to steal
 Our heritage, our pride, our dignity inside

*“Te juro que va caer
 Agua que va caer
 Te digo Chicki que va caer
 Agua que va caer...”*

Studyin’ hiss-stories of some other place
 Conflictin’ lyfestyles of an alien race
 Not knowin’ our original Borinquen names
 Our common ancestors
 African, Arawak and Quisqueya source
 Salutin’ someone else’s flag
 Prayin’ in someone else’s church

*“Te juro que va llover
 Agua que va caer...”*

Encouraged to look like a color not your own
 Speakin’ a language foreign to your soul
 Growin’ up learning lessons ‘bout Pocahontas,
 John Smith, George Washington, Abe Lincoln
 And not knowin’ ‘bout Don Pedro Albizu Campos
 Arturo Schomburg or Lolita Lebrón

Holdin’ on to memories of friends
 Who fought some other man’s war in Vietnam
 Returned as junkies with limbs missing
 Or pieces in body bags

Growin’ up singin’ Oh-say-can-you-see
 And never seeing the lie beyond US-of-A schemes
 That turns us into slaves
 Of ignorance and dis-ease
 Growin’ up not knowin’–not growin’
 Believin’ that we’re free

*“Caballero ya tu lo ve
 Agua que va caer
 Yemayá yo no se por que
 Agua que va caer
 Caballero que rico
 Que rico cha-cha-cha...”*

Growin' up dancin' bombas and plenas
 And didn't know the names of
 Comparsas and merengues
 And couldn't claim the source of

Growin' up repeatin' words by
 Beachboys, Monkeys and Yaba-Daba-Doo
 Not hearin' Mongo Santamaría
 Patato Valdez or Cortijo

Graciela and Celia Cruz singin'
 Prayers from their lips
 While the Beatles claimed the charts
 And Elvis was swingin' his hips

Growin' up with Jimmy Hendrix explodin'
 Santana cryin' thru his axe
 James Brown shoutin' loud
 It's time to learn to be Black and Proud

*“Si yo me muero, mira Papá, tápate con un papel
 Agua que va caer
 Yemayá, ma yo ya tú lo ve
 Agua que va caer
 Yemayá aye yo no se porque
 Agua que va caer...”*

Growin' up confused about our identity
 Are we black or white?
 Are we good or bad?
 Why so often sad?
 Hardly ever glad
 Wonderin' what is the key
 To promote unity in the community

Growin' up watchin' Young Lords
 Pickin' up the gun
 Marchin' thru the neighborhood
 And feedin' all the young

Teachin' all the people
 The truth that leads p'alante
 Don't be ashamed
 To love your beauty
 With orgullo

DESPIERTA BORICUA,
DEFIENDE LO TUYO!

Growin' up discoverin' to stand up for our rights
Fallin' down—risin' up again
Without givin' up the fight
Breakin' down the obstacles
That block us on our path
Luchando through each moment
Tryin' to hold us back

Growin' up holdin' on
To our past and communal culture
Source of our pride lighting fires in our minds
Respectin' one another, praying to our saints
With reverence to our ancestors

Growin' up refusin' to live a lie
Takin' the time, workin' to define
Makin' the space, claimin' our place
Strugglin' to hold onto our peace within
Holding onto our peace within
Hold onto
 peace
 within.

*“Yemayá ya yo y tu lo ve
Agua que va caer
Que va caer, que va caer
Agua que va caer....”*

Credits:

“Aguacero Inside Agua Que Va Caer” © 1997 Sandra María Esteves, from *Undelivered Love Poems*; No Frills Publications (Self-published); New York, NY; 1997; 45 pgs.
Lyrics adapted from original lyrics of "Agua Que Va Caer" by Patato (Carlos Valdez) and Totico (Eugenio Arango) from Patato & Totico; Latino Series, MGM Records Division; Metro-Goldwyn Meyer Inc.; 1350 Avenue of the Americas; New York, NY 10019.