

## THE SPIRIT OF THE DESERT

In the beginning was  
Light  
Heat  
Stone

No breath of wind  
No shade  
Only the flicker  
Of a yellow wing  
Through silent air  
The blink  
Of an inner eyelid there  
The big horn's  
Grave eternal stare

Here on red rock  
A green lace of lichen creeps  
And beneath  
The salamander sleeps  
Dreaming of a flood  
A cool cocoon of mud

There  
A golden scorpion  
And her quick stings  
Like cactus needles  
Catch and pierce  
In all  
The spirit of the desert sings  
Fragile and fierce

### MI COMPLEAÑOS

*(translation by Daniel Helfgot)*

Hoy tengo veintisiete años  
Por la mañana  
Miro desvanecerse las estrellas  
Los dedos calientes de los  
Rayos del sol  
Alcanzando por sobre  
Las montañas.

Recuerdo el rostro de mi padre  
Sus ojos brillantes  
Su camisa amarilla  
Cuando bailábamos  
En mi cumpleaños de quince  
Cómo giraba yo con los tacones  
Nuevos, sin aliento.

### MY BIRTHDAY

Today I am twenty-seven  
In the morning  
I watch the stars fading  
The hot fingers of sunlight  
Reaching over the mountains

I remember my father's face  
His bright eyes  
His yellow shirt  
When we danced  
On my fifteenth birthday  
How I whirled in new high heels  
Breathless

Desde las ventanas del autobús  
Veo  
Agitarse un ala amarilla  
Su camisa amarilla  
Allí; y luego desaparece.

Me duelen los pies.  
Todo el día oigo pedacitos,  
Jirones de una canción,  
Una melodía que casi no  
Recuerdo,  
¿Una canción de cuna? ¿Una nana?

*This is my day  
Welcome welcome  
This is my voice  
Do you hear it  
This is my hand  
Take it take it  
This is my home  
My heart my spirit*

No puedo evitar que se acumule  
El polvo  
En cada grieta y rincón,  
El agua de lavar ya está  
Turbia con el

Todos los días empujo el  
Desierto hacia atrás  
La arena depredadora  
Sus granitos;  
El polvo amargo se asienta en  
Mis labios

Cierro los ojos  
Soñando con una inundación  
Esta noche  
El cielo es una piñata  
Hinchada con regalos  
Inimaginables.

Me voy a cubrir los ojos  
Con tu amada camisa, papá.  
Voy a golpear duro y segura

¡Oye! ¡Ah, oye!  
Un millón de estrellas  
Un millón, millón de estrellas  
Están cayendo en el desierto

Estoy bailando contigo, otra  
vez; Girando  
Con mis zapatos de cumpleaños

From the windows of the bus  
I see  
The flicker of a yellow wing  
His yellow shirt  
There and then gone

My feet ache  
All day long I hear shreds  
Thin threads of song  
A melody I cannot quite  
Remember  
A nursery rhyme? A lullaby?

*This is my day  
Welcome welcome  
This is my voice  
Do you hear it  
This is my hand  
Take it take it  
This is my home  
My heart my spirit*

I cannot keep the dust from  
Gathering  
In every crease and crevice  
The wash water is already  
Cloudy with it

Everyday I push the desert back  
The predatory sand, the grit  
The bitter powder settles on  
My lips

I close my eyes  
Dreaming of a flood  
Tonight  
The sky is a piñata  
Swollen with unimaginable Gifts

I will wrap my eyes up  
In your beloved shirt, papa  
I will strike hard and sure

Listen! oh listen!  
A million stars  
A million million stars  
Are falling in the desert

I am dancing with you again  
Whirling  
In my birthday shoes

## **ANOTHER BIRTHDAY**

Today I am twenty-seven  
This morning I stand in the  
Fountain  
Where children are splashing  
A mosaic of cheeks and elbows  
Knees and teeth flashing  
Jewels of water beading  
Brown skin white skin  
White skin brown skin  
What are they singing  
This flock of little birds?

*This is my day  
Welcome welcome  
This is my voice  
Do you hear it?  
This is my hand  
Take it take it  
This is my home  
My heart, my spirit!*

We grow here  
Stubborn and pliant  
Desert flowers  
Delicate – defiant

*This is my day  
Welcome Welcome  
This is my voice  
Do you hear it?*

At a sidewalk café  
I drink coffee  
A grandmother sits  
On a red chair  
Knitting green lace  
A boy with black hair  
Sleeps in her lap  
I know his face

Over the square  
Floating higher and higher  
A yellow balloon  
A memory of the moon

I will not ask my heart  
Why it is happy  
I only know that it is  
(Welcome welcome)

Over the square  
Floating higher and higher  
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A memory of the moon

I will not ask my heart  
Why it is happy  
I only know that it is  
(Welcome welcome)

I close my eyes  
Dreaming of the flood  
The water droplets drumming  
In the night  
Remembering  
Cathedral light on granite  
cliffs  
The strumming of guitars  
A young girl dancing in the  
desert  
Her hair full of stars

#### **DESERT FLOWER**

The spirit of the desert  
Is ancient and young  
A still grey head  
A quick pink tongue  
A supple spine  
A dry white bone  
A flowering vine  
From dust and stone

Here we sow our dreams  
In rich and barren sand  
Here we grow our dreams  
Both humble and grand  
Together and alone  
United and apart  
From light and heat and stone  
A vibrant blooming heart

This is my day  
Welcome welcome  
This is my voice  
Do you hear it?  
This is my hand  
Take it take it  
This is my home  
My heart, my spirit!