February 2015

Applications for Dummies

Carla M. Sanchez
Loyola Marymount University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/fgv

Part of the Critical and Cultural Studies Commons, Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Fiction Commons, Illustration Commons, Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons, Nonfiction Commons, Other English Language and Literature Commons, and the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/fgv/vol3/iss1/9

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Academic Resource Center at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First-Generation College Experience by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.
The paper demands evidence of my claim. 
Its paleness is assaulting, as alarming as its questions. 
Does it know that I cannot compete? 
Does it know of my inadequacy?

Long I struggle to find the words to explain my mediocrity 
while that immaculate mantel just sits there, asking:

Was I gracious enough to share my time with the poor? 
Did I spend my summer bathed in the glow of scholarship at a campus abroad? 
Was it Paris or Rome?

The charade continues, 
unknowingly excluding and cruel in its revelations. 
It teaches of meagerness.

The words that so often assist me 
come to my aid now, blooming in my arid lips, 
flowing inwardly to my fingers 
like a balm of shameful care.

Words embellish my answers, 
se ductively curving the end of my sentences 
with promises of future remuneration 
in pride, in grand accomplishments.

“Heck, give us the chance and I’ll even end world hunger!”

I crack my fingers. 
I grow bold. 
My territory has expanded. 
It reaches all across that once clean sheet 
written in angry-black ink, 
in harsh and thick lines that resemble an Andean condor here, 
a violent Motherwell there. 
The patrons of my subjugation have taught me well, so I know what to say.

But I want to believe it too. 
I want to swallow them completely, 
all the words, 
each conspiring syllable,
each printed dream,
I want to eat them feverishly and in a greedy gesture,
to heal the hunger of silenced mouths, of empty pockets.

But the majesty of those lines
(the solace of us illiterates of hope)
is false and harmful.
It justifies a crime of scarcity.
It does not serve me.

My fingers pause as this knowledge corrupts my happy haze.
Impositions of reality start to haunt, trap and punish
with the ardor of a zealous whip.
Still, I shrug, finish and seal my humble petition.

I get up and walk through the sunny gardens,
dragging my wise boots,
carrying a name that equates with servitude,
moving slowly not to fall:
a shadow in a crowd of luminous vibrancy.