

Children Of Magdalene*Emanuel Xavier*

Dedicated to Reverend Phelps

There are so many dead pretending to live amongst us now
 who belong to a church hidden behind the harvest of hate
 which takes us in and blinks us out with ignorant eyes
 and condemn us for lying together in the tombs of our beds
 while their savior hangs from nails displayed on hollow walls
 and our sacrifices are left to hang on fences
 bleeding rivers of glory
 to wash away the sins of their world

This prejudice is the pain that clouds my eyes and knots my spine
 the scars on the back of my head
 engraved by those who reach out open arms
 bloodied with hypocrisy, lost dreams, and intangible mantras
 those who haunt our daily prayers
 with the sounds of oppression
 to silence our shepherds with death
 because death equals dreams never to be heard of again
 and our prophets get no maps to salvation

But the wind will not inherit the echoes of our souls
 we will not leave our canvas with unfinished colors
 or remain the uninvited children of a lesser God
 we will ground our bare feet with toes in soil
 listen for the wind chimes in the insanity of life
 light candles for our brothers and sisters
 from the West Side Highway piers of New York City
 to the farm lands of Laramie, Wyoming
 to the Castro Streets of San Francisco
 and feel the closest we can to heaven
 because true love has no boundaries
 and our angels have wings too

AL PIE DE OYA

Emanuel Xavier

I shared a drink with Miguel Algarin,
founder of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe,
the place that sanctified me from the streets with poetry

& I found myself thinking about Mikey,
not the Mikey X I had contrived as an alias in my writings,
but the Miguel Pero that had been this man's best friend

Miguel (Algarin) stared back at me as if to compare
& I remembered one of his poems which read
"Instructions for ceremony should be written as a poem"
When I die, I want to be burned with my books
flesh and words melting into one (*echame candela*)
ashes unleashed over the West Side Highway piers
gently dispersed by the winds of Oya
carrying my soul to the secret verses and hidden places
where the children will always find me
where my lovers will always find me
where I had found me watching the bright lights of New York City
hoping one day I would shine as bright as the stars
inspiring hope in the hearts of hustlers to come

However, with many nights spent stretched out on her graves
tombstones casting shadows on faded wings
the Queen of Cemeteries will want to embrace me
If buried, black is sanctioned
color of my children and eyes and revolutions
garnish me with poetry and rosaries to set the spirit on fire
haunting dreams with words and deliverance

And so maybe I proved prostitutes can become poets
shamelessly rising above and beyond homelessness
Sitting there like a novelist posing in lush, spacious apartments



while French journalists covered me with cigarette mist
asking questions like, “What does ‘munchin’ trade’ mean?”

I came a long way only to find that it wasn’t enough
that the mistakes of the past limit the future
even though when it rains, we all get wet-
the prostitute, the poet, the prophet
Each breath brings me closer to the end of this journey
until dead is dead is dead

In the end, it doesn’t matter how I lived, how I died, or what becomes of what is left
Listen for me in the flicker of candles
Inspiration often comes from silence

Emanuel Xavier is author of the novel, *Christ-Like*, and the poetry collections, *Pier Queen* and *Americano* . He has been featured on PBS’s *In The Life* and *Russell Simmons presents Def Poetry* on HBO. He was born and raised in Brooklyn and currently lives in Bushwick.

Taken from the poetry collection, *Americano*.
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