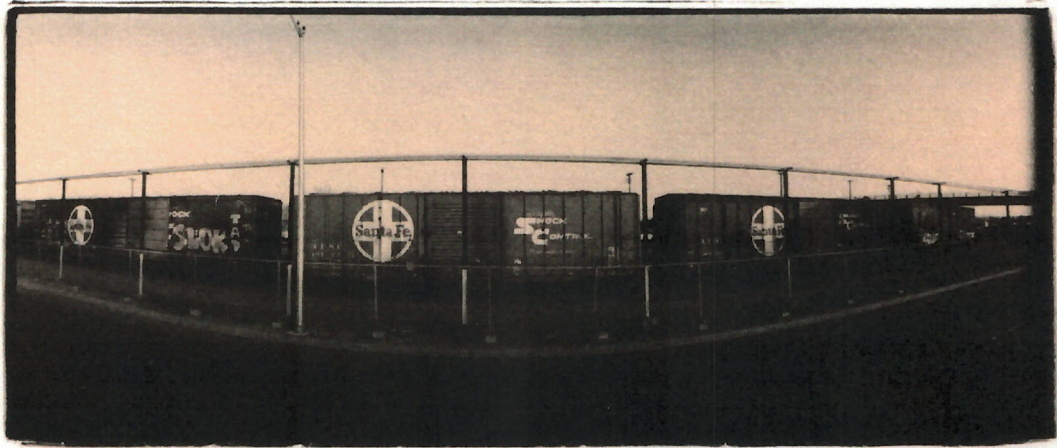
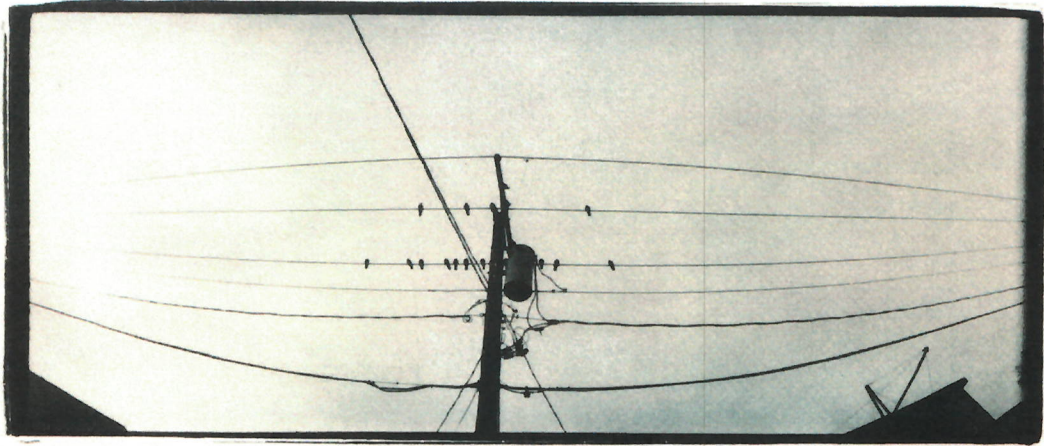




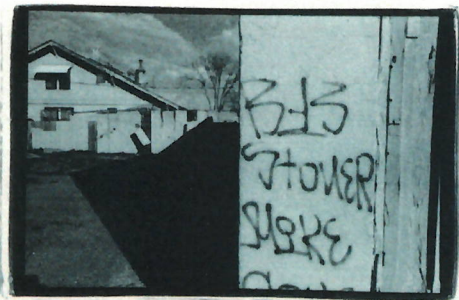
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MORA

*What the Heart Affirms
Lo que el corazón sostiene*

La Jicarita Peak rises twelve thousand feet in the air.
It is the *xumatl*, the sky bowl of our indomitable spirit.

*La cumbre de la Jicarita se levanta doce mil pies sobre el nivel del mar.
Es el xumatl, el jumate celeste de nuestro espíritu indomable.*

The truth is we have always listened to the litany of ancestral souls that accompanies the birth of each person born at the foot of La Jicarita peak, and we have never neglected the accompanying clamor of those voices which fills the very air we breathe and is with us each moment of the day and of the night. Our ancestors are the unseen visitors that sit at our kitchen tables when we speak of the past; they are the ancestral countenance that we recognize on the faces of strangers that we pass on the street. Now they are the deep shadows that move in the old abandoned patios; they are the unearthed bones that walk the earth and do not know eternal rest or peace.

MORA

The Heart Awaits its Turn at Life Again
El corazón espera su regreso a la tierra

The old people have known the delicate dance of the Earth's elements: wind, fire and water. They've seen the changing masks of life and death on the face of each new day's horizon. When the storms appear and the fury of the mountain sounds, the old women step out in the rushing wind, their long gray hair filled with electricity, and they cut at the clouds with long kitchen knives and cast salt to the four directions of the wind and they chant the song of lives upon lives of endless memory: *Santa Bárbara doncella, libranos del rayo y de la centella*. Then the flashing light and the windblown shadows of the clouds dance about the fields and above the rusted tin roofs of the village and through the cottonwoods along the river, flashing off window panes recessed deep in timeless adobe walls. Many people swear to have seen the shadows of the dead in this half light, moving through the open doorways of the old abandoned houses, walking silently behind the tongued flames of oil lamps into the inner rooms where they are lost from sight. Are they dancing in the dark? Are they praying at their altars in the dim glow of candles? Are they covering the mirrors with black cloths to draw away the lightning? Are they the half-clothed bony skeletons of lovers, locked in loving embraces, awaiting their turn at life again?

MORA

The Heart is Pierced by Thorns El corazón es traspasado de espinas

Yes . . . the Brotherhood has died out a lot, the Penitentes that is. Here in the Valley, when I was young nearly all the people went to the Morada. My Grandfather was an Hermano, my father belonged to a Morada as well. My mother was an auxiliary at the Morada in Los Tramperos. During Holy Week she would cook pots full of torta de huevo and chile, alverjón, quelites, panocha, all the lenten dishes and she would take them to the Hermanos in the Morada. They in turn said many prayers for her, for the health and well-being of our family and in memory of those who had died and gone before us.

Around this time of year we became very reserved and reticent and went about our business quietly. There was a Morada here, another Morada further up, two or three more on the other side of the Valley. At this time of the year one would not hear anything but the singing of alabados filling the canyons and the Valley. When one didn't hear singing from this side of the Valley, you'd hear it down the other side and at night, there they'd go . . . through that canyon or through the next one over . . . Some walked barefoot, others carried the holy images, others kept their heads shrouded in black cloths. They would leave from this Morada here, or from another one and go across the ridge to Río Coyote and Los Luceros. All around, everywhere, there seemed to be continual movement as the Hermanos went about making pilgrimages to one holy shrine or another or keeping some solemn promise for blessings bestowed upon our Valley by the miraculous holy images of our altars.

After Holy Week had passed, our ears would still be ringing for a week . . . It seemed we could hear alabados still being sung everywhere. For days after the singing went on . . . Yes, the Brotherhood has died out a lot . . . but always, around this time of year, when the first full moon of Spring hangs above La Jicarita . . . What's that I hear? The wind, yes, only the wind, ¿verdad?

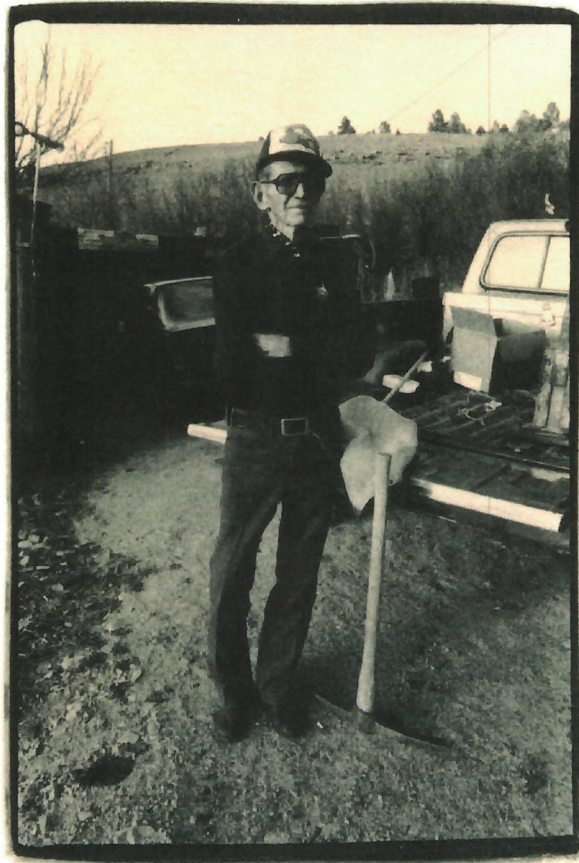
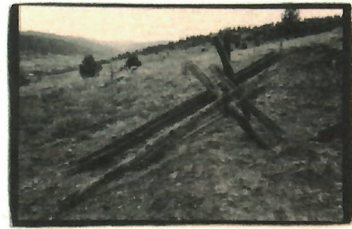
MORA

*The Heart is Pierced by Thorns
El corazón es traspasado de espinas*

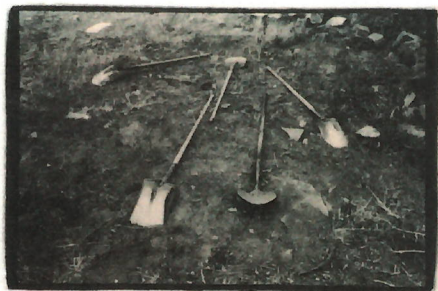
Sí, eh . . . La Hermandad se ha ido acabando mucho, los penitentes, pues. Aquí en el valle de Mora cuando estaba yo joven la mayoría de la gente iban a la Morada. Mi agüelo fue hermano, mi papá también perteneció a la Morada. Mi mamá era auxiliadora de la Morada de Los Tramperos. Durante la Semana Santa se ponía a cocinar las ollas enteras de torta de huevo, de alverjón, de quelites, de panocha, todas las comidas de Cuaresma, y se las llevaba a los hermanos allá en la Morada. Los hermanos, a su vez, rogaban mucho por su vida y salud, por el bienestar de su familia y en nombre de los fieles juntos.

No más entraba la Cuaresma teníamos mucho recato y reserva y hacíamos nuestro quehaceres sigilosamente. Había una Morada aquí, otra Morada allá, dos o tres del otro lado del valle. Cuando llegaban estos tiempos, ya no se oía más que el cantar de alabaos que retumbaban en los cañones y por todo el valle. Cuando no se oía cantar de este lado del valle, se oía cantar del otro . . . y de noche pues aquí van . . . por ese cañón, por aquel otro . . . Algunos iban descalzos, otros acarreando las santas imágenes de las Moradas, otros llevaban las cabezas tapadas con vendas negras. Salían procesiones de esta Morada o de aquella y aquí van cruzando los cerros pa' ir a dar al río del Coyote o Los Luceros. Aquí y por dondequiera, parecía un puro revoltijo de movimiento, según andaban estos hermanos en su negocio de hacer peregrinaciones a una santa ermita o cumpliendo promesas por alguna bendición dada a nuestro valle.

Después de que pasaba el tiempo de la Semana Santa, quedábamos aturdidos por una semana . . . dondequiera parecía que oíamos cantar alabaos. Por días después del Viernes Santo, se seguía oyendo el cantar. Sí, eh . . . La Hermandad se ha ido acabando mucho . . . pero siempre como en este tiempo, cuando la primera luna llena de la primavera cuelga sobre La Jicarita . . . ¿Qué es lo que oigo? El viento, claro, sí no es más que el viento, ¿verdad?

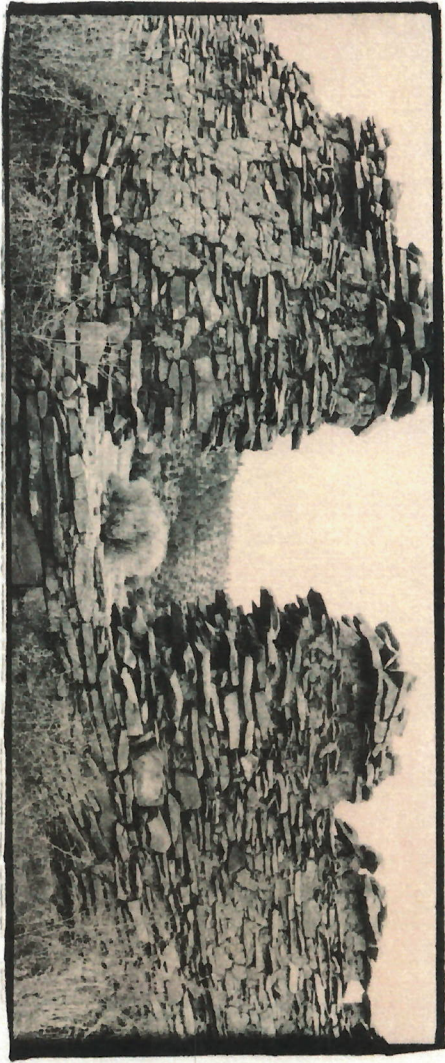


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Tony Ortega

A la Frontera da Aztlán

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