

ANNE WALDMAN

CHE GUEVARA CAME TO ME IN A DREAM

She dreams herself the mystic lover of Che Guevara (a corpse) indoctrinated in anti-imperialismo and is roused to write an altruistic manifesto for the good of all humanity. Perhaps she will call it "Earthlings! Human Comes from the Word "Humus": Remember your Origins!" Back then she went to the party to meet Raoul Castro who was accessible as an infra structure rationalist. Che has laughed at her Buddhist naivete re: taking up arms for revolution. When he pronounces "oil lamp" so carefully in English what did that mean? Was "planets" a euphemism for missiles? Is this dream a rune about the Bay of Pigs she worried a long time ago? Es necessario...he mutters, as he morphs into someone else. Something like that. A line from Cuban poet Nancy Morejon hovers in the ear... "to bask in the afternoon sun in Havana Cuba free territory of America..." Free territory. She has recently returned from a conference in Venezuela where everyone danced late into the night, although the subtext persisted in a drama between sex, poetry and revolution. Revolution is a term that turns many ways. You needed a bodyguard on the ominous streets. More decorous occasions, sponsored by banks and restaurants. Her passport is carefully scrutinized in all directions of space. Poetry aficionado teen fans share their tequila and marijuana at the decimated beach. They all bask in the sun. Or "surrogate mother" is a better description for her role to Che in the actual dream. Like the boys she dreams she looks after in the large compound in the ancillary dream, they count upon her savvy. Her son is writing a paper on Hugo Chavez." Is he a good guy or a bad guy, Mom?" She brings home a statue of Maria Lionza and will pray to her for nuclear disarmament and the "re-embodiment" of Che. We need a William Burroughs to describe the addiction to power, to oil, to ideology in this increasingly bifurcated world of euphemism, lies, gulag torture, the radical symmetry of displacement, the twist of bodies burn, turn in the wind. Waterboarding? The whole world is watching. But is it. Is The Homeland, watching? Watching the mudslides? She interviews Ernesto Cardenal who speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Continent! Continent! Dear America ("I'm a Wrecker") It is not your only America continent, only.

*planets
will fly
from
their
spheres
and*

*an alembic
oil lamp
will flicker
& turn
emblematically
in the
beauty world*

he said, somber now, sobered now, from a torture site –

& she said: out of what charnel ground do

you rise now to tell me this?

This was a full blue/gray jacket
This was a uniform of control
This was a working family
The blue line held work
The lone blue line held teal, held maroon
The gray held a crown of subtlety
There was no need for royalty here
Lineage was dangerous, reeks of privilege, of scorn
The intellect kept dreamy, kept dreaming
Or did it?
Red ink, right hand, to ink you away
Red ink against you to make deportation
To mark you for your life
In spite of beautiful gaze of where you are from
which is vast, where you are from:
the skyline...the orchard...the alley
the camp...the road...the desert
Whole anthropological worlds
Where is the intellect from?
Is it green?
The color of sunset, of straw?
What other world is it?
How may I get there?
How far away is it from here?
Trapped in Guantanamo in a dead zone
How far in yellow? In mauve?
This was an orange monkey suit
This was a lone white towel

This was a cup of water, of dark gruel
This was a wire cage
This was not a colorful rug for prayer
Cold...bare...ground

& she, the oracle, said Muster men for war...

pick up the phrase "muster men for war"

where relationships are fluid
marked by time spent in cages

(shut them down, shut them down)

or fire-booting on the fringes of civilization

hot war, calculated terror, pyramid of severed human heads

this Tartar life, an endless war...

& tall soft boots

& he wore a tunic

when in the east the steppe is higher

a long belted coat
quilted, or fur-lined

& if one felt if he were a Scythian he could be that for you

a turban against the summer sun

come up a steppe, come up

& rode a small horse

rather a pony hardier than a horse

& fought from that horse

with efficient bow

on the left

& arrows

in a quiver on the right

if he is rich, this one, held sword or saber

but never underestimate the power of the bow

have brought

me
back
to my
self

a bow – tune that string

his?

un-tune that string

alive
for a
night

picture him, the wastes of
him

down his power

where whirring
abuts
demand

who is a man not caged?

Who is a woman not “whirrrr”?

someone
somewhere
nullifies
a taut treaty
someone
somewhere
un-signifies a
weapons ban
a goal,
a basket,
a score,

a genetic assist
for what purpose?
no hidden agenda please
keep
power ethics
out in the open
where we try to sleep but can't oh can't sleep

in the different
time zones bodies hold...

Dear Anne:

I am trying to notify you about the service re-call to Iraq. Seems my wounded-in-action status is low. Can the school lawyers help? I need to spend my life in poetry not on the killing fields.

Love,
G.

A weapon whose spine's a
cordillera of pleasure: taut bow
like fine lady's curve it would be
mantilla, *mons veneris* might be
trobairitz left old Scythian Nueva York
coast for
"come to it on top of it body to gloat, to sing"
would be that it could
come round to humble
jest jagged
points are obstacles are collateral damage
breasts of goddesses, pricks of demons
no playground for fun-hogs but
bomb clusters that shatter illusion
for century's pop up glamour, an SUV beam
shows you happy not to be beachfront
above the earth quake you
come to breathe among & it is
woman's pride dark latina perpetuity
or bright exposure the animals course
over those shy ruins for
dusted with power & named thus:

((((((((((((((((AGAPE))))))))))))))

with pieces of the jungle still
lodged in their mouths

& the dead step into
a New World

Anne: I'm thinking about encounters that need more time, more Spanish. A few days don't work, it's just a lot of stress traveling, which is interesting but quite abstract because you never find time to root yourself. I think, regarding my intense journey to South America, that I discovered something, which is spirit, that is in favour of the spirit of Dr. Ernesto Guevara Lynch, born in Rosario in 1939, died in the mountains of Bolivia, somewhere, shot, in 1968. With 39 years, very thin, ascetic, asthmatic. Some writers in Rosario said that "el Ché" had the feeling of being another juvenile, revolutionary, communist Jesus.

In the recent years I read some of his books – Che was a very good prose writer. His account on the Cuban Revolution, which I read a couple of years ago, is the best book on this history by anyone. Clear, written with acid, no eulogy, just an intense comment of what really happened in the Sierra Maestra in Cuba.

For me it is also strange that I looked for the house in Rosario where heads spent his childhood, Calle Entre Rios 480. There is no plate in honor of his. The Italian poet Claudio Pozzani remarked, because I visited the house with him and the historian Eloísa Rodenas, that it is interesting that the great revolutionaries of the 20th century came from good middle-class or bourgeois families, and the real men in power came from the lower class, be it fascists or communists or North American imperialists. Right now I'm feeling lost anyway. Do I belong to here, Austria, Central Europe? I felt much more in time and space 2 weeks ago, in intense talks with friendly fellow poets in Argentine. It seems that poets have to be lost. I don't care either.

Best, b.

Che said "grinding poverty"
the drive around Avila

bulk of a mountain
granite manatee
separates a city from the sea
that year ago I was
bereft of love

& many good poets dead

what century got stuck?

& we got
ripped at the beach &
on more tequila
dear hopes-of-the-future: come
out in the sun
sand still lodged
in underwear
as one looked up to see
the
stricken the
homeless
&
tin roofs
the dwellings like so many...
torrential rains...
mudslides...

and I said to him, asked him, Ernesto, as a radical Catholic priest who has practiced “liberation theology” and was stripped of religious authority and “declared an outlaw,” could he say something please about how faith was sustaining him in the dark times, when the world was turning dark and we were trying again again to push, push against the darkness

and he said *I believe capitalism will end because it is an unjust system, and because the laws of evolution are about more and more union, more and more love among our species. Particles unite to form the atom, atoms unite to form the molecule, molecules unite to form the organism, organisms unite to form the society. And society, for some time now, tries to have less and less inequality. We overcame slavery and feudalism, and now it's time to overcome capitalism. Later on we'll surpass socialism too. Then we'll have a perfect system. Then we will be in the Kingdom of Heaven. In a poem of mine I say that communism and the Kingdom of Heaven are the same. This faith sustains me both as a Christian and as a Revolutionary. I believe in God's Reign, that is—equality— as well as I believe in the social revolution. The expression “Kingdom of Heaven” in Jesus's time meant exactly what the word revolution means now. It was equally subversive. The prophets had*

announced a new reign but it wasn't subversive since it was to be in the future. Subversive is announcing that it will happen in the present, as Jesus did, and they killed him...

Carib, Arawak & Chibcha
& Timote-Cuica dwelled here

irrigation & terracing advanced

stepped into
the new world

*Never have I heard or
read of so
much sweet water
within a
salt ocean*

wide mouth of
the Rio Orinoco

El Mar Dulce
Golfo de Paria

Lago Maracaibo

the Indians living in thatch

on stilts

“Little Venice” we call it

caudillos

largest exporter of oil on which *YOU* depend

Caracazo

warplanes between sky scrapers

Remember:

Battle of Boyaca

Battle of Carabobo 24 June 1821

Battle of Pichincha

Gran Colombia

El Libertador

bosqu nublado

araguaney

petroglyphs

joropo

harp cuatro & maracas

salsa, merengue

(with handsome Santos, best dancer on the floor)

aqui y ahora

the cult of Maria Lionza
symbol of harmonious *mestizaje*, her name at
every door, the mythic
soft lettered identity
although she is from the mountain of Sorte in Yaracuy
& is the highest deity in an altar of 3 which includes
Guicaipuro (Native chief murdered by the Spanish
& el Negro Felipe (slave murdered by white masters)
she is alive amongst the large influxes of
Cuban and Haitian immigrants as
well as arriving with the migrations of Venezuelan
farmers to the
oil industries in the cities...

so goes it:

a Caquetio Indian chief's daughter born with green eyes, a bad sign (evil eye),
he takes her to a lake and gives her to the anaconda but she rises (a goddess)
from the lake surrounded by many plants and animals

OR

if she saw her reflection a monstrous snake would come bringing death and
destruction so the father hid her and she had 22 guardians

OR

as the girl "Yara" she meets with Ponce de Leon using the name
Maria del Prado, but failed to dissuade him from his conquering mode

OR

“she grew up among the animals of the forest until
one day she was attracted by a strange light and disappeared”

or as

Maria de la Onza , white, she becomes Mary riding the Boar (“onza”)

& is she hiding her own murder? in double transference theory?

Shapeshifter, she becomes a queen but she can also become a snake or a
diplomat

she helps you go into trance, become possessed
the shaman (*banco*) will put you in touch with her...

who is she

syncretic Maria driven by virgin lust on the left hand path

who can “trance” your “property” in day glow
in a land phone
a land address

why do they keep sending the bill
here?

what’s the next obligation to
start a pacifist nomad’s day?

a report on bird
migration’s
navigational device
thought they might head south
over water

but
turned east
over a shiny new gulag
from “rendition”
as in
render me
delusional
render me cruel

a small prison your mind’s in

sings for light (south as in Guantanamo)
I won't confess anything but:
holy land, holy metallic strife

I won't confess anything without care without seed pearl without
stitching closed the eye of the falcon without seemly rectitude
without the platitude of O thou muddled media pundit without
questionable thermosphere without it working against you and
when it does being able to go on without it without gavottes
without gazelles that you study in neighboring continent poetries
without spallation and without a diving bell how will you survive?
I won't say anything without rapacious wildcats
without the sense of security you have always expected without your
familiar stage fright without the caves without the bombing of caves
without the mystery of caves without the caves in your memory of that
mystery that lives in caves without caves that long to exist in the
hand print in the cave of that memory without the rivets that hold
the wing together that hold the whole throbbing machine together that
assert the rivet dominion without which you do not have a plan of
fastening together of wings of arms for the automaton that holds
the capital together without its own mind of wheels and cogs
that run the show without all the pixels and efforts of more dominion
without borders to cross without needing to carry things over borders
the invasion of your homeland (*coming? coming soon?*) without it, what
call in the night what call is answered what nuance what tantrum in the night
or end of speculation what call what alarm is sounding deep in the home

In 1553 Princess Magdalena daughter of the ruler Cisijopi
donated to the Dominicans:
“The salt beds of Tehuantepec, her fields, a fruit orchard half
a league in length, her recreational baths with crystal springs
that water the orchard....”
what prize
what enterprise
& did the holy fathers
luxuriate in those crystal baths?

did conquistadores
gorge on papaya of
the new world?

and do we travel more than half a league
to plant our grapes, lemons, rubber trees

economics

& do we still “toil in the vineyard”

coveted fruits of
 a brave new world
only the
Zapotec women
go to market
snarling “marimba teeth!
marimba teeth”
their insult at the men...

those conquerors,
gardeners who chew and masticate
the spoils for a colonial, a “spiritual”
agenda?
fruits of men
one ageless moon
an abandoned orchard
earthquakes and mudslides in another century
what is reaped? what is sowed?

Yet it was a time for cities
and cities existed
Cities were, by rigor of happenstance
and agreement, ambitious
The founding fathers needed them
A language of “city” showed up
Cities were friendly, positive
Metallurgy arrived and
the wheel came rolling in
The marketplace was born
and anything you could ever want
was there for you
and anyone you could ever hope
to speak with in the language of city
was sitting next to you
Companions you
might walk with
in the nascent parks
or on sunny boulevards
or in the factory cafeterias

(oil on our hands)
(*sun shine down now*)
Did the founding mothers need them?

From *Iovis*, an epic poem, forthcoming from Coffe House Press, 2009