

The Terror of Clean

That space between
a *limpieza* and sweeping your kitchen
with a dirty broom, clogged with hair and dustmites is
very, very small, or so they would have you believe.

List of items in a cleaning kit:

1. broom
2. soap
3. brillo
4. *machete*
5. Kalashnikov Modernized Automatic Rifle (AKM) or IMI Galil
6. shovel

It is Colombia, it is the 1990s, it is now.

The scrape of nation-building
rendering pillage heroic by
a placid discourse of bourgeois mediocrity:
the exceptional or eccentric is dangerous,
did you not hear? Did you not learn it from the inception of
your breathing?

Aporophobia: fear of and contempt towards people who live in poverty.

And these are the disposables, the unwanted, the extraneous bodies, unprofitable,
irrelevant to the march of silver and gold, the laborious privileges of citizenship,
these are the ones who will catch the intention of lavish purges
and be forced to swallow ammo too big for the throat.

Kill list for Mano Negra, the elusive yet pervasive hand of death,
another piece of the putrid machinery that governs, that declares from the pit of unchurched holy
taking, all the sins in their deadliness:

1. Foundlings, those with no nest, the homeless. Poverty is a sin. Sloth is a sin.
2. Nightwalkers selling their tongues like wares. Sex outside marriage is a sin.
3. False eyelashes and skirts on a cock-strut, Transgender, Transvestite, Transgressing bodies in a militarized culture. Deviation from masculinity is a sin.
4. Faggots and *lesbianas*. Homosexuality is a sin.
5. Human Rights Activists. Speaking out is a sin. Anti-imperialism is a sin.
6. Skin the color of earth and sunless hours. Refusing assimilation is a sin.
7. Mothers and daughters. Mourning is a sin. Remembering is a sin.

Police with their muddy heels in stirrups on badged horses
talk their talk of cleaner streets, boasting of revelatory
enterprise, bastion cities of order, security sacrosanct,

so the suits can take trains without trouble
and the young women of El Poblado, Comuna 14
can walk their unblemished cheeks and poodles down the
sidewalks without risking

the tainted guilt of beggarly hands
or the unfamiliar succulence of arousal,

we are the vermin here.

We are the edged blades of fallen yearning,
struck as with lightning and thunder
for all the labyrinthine meanderings of our days
away from the death of a thrust docility,

and we pay for our refusal of purity,
we pay for the distress of their daughters' lips
reaching for ours at sunset in the parks littered
with deviants, our deviations carrying their discomfort,

we pay for not being able to pay, we pay for having been
boys who wore their mothers' heels when she was away
working her third job in one twirl of the sun, we pay for
letting our nucleus grieve, for clipping our roses for hawking
in moonlit markets, for fighting the deepest
fight we can muster in the face of oblivion and contempt, for

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Watch out, they will
sweep you into the gutter
and bury you with all the refuse,
tattered clothing, scrap metal, broken radios
of a convoluted wartime sensibility
in the afterglow of an immaculate sterility,

leaving your teeth to shine in the rain