

Town of Frijoles

By Ray González

For Juan Felipe Herrera

In the town of frijoles,
men eat their meals without
washing their hands, wanting
to bless their mothers' food
with soil from the fields.

In the town of frijoles,
boys beat on hollow pots,
the last wiping of their sides
with a piece of tortilla as
holy a moment as taking
the wafer in church.

In the town of frijoles,
women undress to keep
their babies warm, stories
whispered into bald heads
revealed as poems decades
later, when it is early.

In the town of frijoles,
old men cry for their
fathers and mothers,
tombstone ranches dotting
the night moon where
the pinto aromas extend
beyond the bowl of the sun.

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