

Two Guitars

By Victor Hernández Cruz

Two guitars were left in a room all alone
They sat on different corners of the parlor
In this solitude they started talking to each other
My strings are tight and full of tears
The man who plays me has no heart
I have seen it leave out of his mouth
I have seen it melt out of his eyes
It dives into the pores of the earth
When they squeeze me tight I bring
Down the angels who live off the chorus
The trios singing loosen organs
With melodious screwdrivers
Sentiment comes off the hinges
Because a song is a mountain put into
Words and landscape is the feeling that
Enters something so big in the harmony
We are always in danger of blowing up
With passion
The other guitar:
In 1944 New York
When the Trio Los Panchos started
With Mexican & Puerto Rican birds
I am the one that one of them held
Tight like a woman
Their throats gardenia gardens
An airport for dreams
I've been in theaters and cabarets
I played in an apartment on 102nd street
After a baptism pregnant with women
The men flirted and were offered
Chicken soup
Echoes came out of hallways as if from caves
Someone is opening the door now
The two guitars hushed and there was a
Resonance in the air like what is left by
The last chord of a bolero.

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Victor Hernandez Cruz was born in Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico. He moved to New York City with his family when he was five years old, but he didn't start learning English until two years later when his family bought a television set. He started writing poetry early and at seventeen self-published his first book, *Papo Got His Gun! And Other Poems*, on a mimeograph machine. Cruz writes from the observation point of traveler and city dweller; he is fluent in Spanish and English, and the poems reveal his familiarity with music, New York, California, the Caribbean, Puerto Rican history, and the immigrant experience. He is also one of the founders of the Before Columbus Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes the recognition of multicultural writers.

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