

Paradise

My home.
She is
Wondrous,
Mystical,
Alluring.

She is
The fountain of youth.

She is
Fluorescent bays.

She is
Rainforest,
Rivers,
Mountains.

She is
Strength,
Power,
Pride.
She is
Admired
And despised.

What do you call her?
Paradise?

You see clear,
Blue water
And rainbow gems
Made of tropical fish.

She is poised.
You don't feel
The push
And pull
Of waves
Keeping her skirt shores
A blend of
Turquoise and white.

Modern commodities
Threaten genocide
On organic enchantments
That dress her.
You see her
Sky blue locs
And white,
Cloud crowns.

You smell
Her morning dew
Perfume
And salty breezes.

Resort tycoons
Will never
Let you
See her age.
They
Will never
Let you
See her sick.

Diagnosis
Industrialization.
Commercialization.
Colonization.

We see
Her cloud coils
Turn grey.

We see
Concrete crack
With wrinkles
On her foliage.

We see
The bile
Flowing
From our callejóns

We see
She's sick.
We see
She's hurt.
We see
Her.

I'm sure
You'll never see
The cats,
Dogs,
Rats,
And chickens
Run wild.

I bet
You'll never see
Her tongue
Be cut
Into the shapes
Of Washington,
Pac Sun,
Katy Perry,
& McDonalds.

I know
You'll never meet
A lost child.

What do you call her?
Paradise?

Where her children
Must read
Between
Stars & stripes
Of a language
They don't speak.

Where teens
Are providers
And parents,
Wearing camo
Just to be seen.

She starves
To feed them.
She cries floods
In their name.
She is now
Barren.

What do you call her?
Paradise?

Where her
Famed fort
Of armor
And pastel
Pueblo antiguo
Share streets
& shores
With her
Notorious ghetto.

Irony
The true
Enchanting pearl
Of the sea.
Her portraits
Of la garita del diablo
Overlooking
Her son's,
Anthony paid,
Now paint-chipped
Basketball court
Filled with her kids,
The forgotten ones,
Whose names
You'll never know.

What do you call her?
Paradise?

Where neglected,
Wooden homes,
To you,
Give her character,
But, to us,
Are shreds in her skirt
From past hurricanes.

 You flock
To her capital
For piña coladas
And to save
Passport fees,
Yet avoid her heart
In the forest
And her soul
In small towns.

We're reminded
Of her place
As the last colony.

 She is an attraction,
An encaged exhibit,
A property.

You see Amazons
And Cockatoos
Adorn her neck
With feathers.

 We see Vultures
Strangling her
With claws.

You see her
As convenient.
We see her
Struggling to survive.

 What do you call her?
Paradise?

She is paradise.

 Beautiful
Even in death.

She is drowning,
Living beneath
The sea
Of oppression.

 But
She is still paradise.

She is paradise,
To us.
Our home.

 She is paradise,
To you.
Your escape.
Your toy.

For us,
There is no escape.
Our only escape
Is to leave
Our paradise.