

Pasos Manchados

These worn white shoes,
Emerald and orange bleached away,
Cover the stains of chicken shit
I inherited from overgrown grass,
Surrounding an ancestral farmhouse,
Made of moss-eaten stones that will outlast my name.
A lineage of Marys and Johns that washed
Into mid-century porcelain along the East River.
Devotion to nose-stinging amber liquors
Raised a silent tribe of O'Bedients,
Fenced into landscaped yards,
Wearing uniform careers and 2.5 kids,
Aerosol hairsprays, and beige sweaters for Easter,
With prejudices that can't be called racism,
Because we vote Democrat in this house.

Paint on the facade is promised to dry evenly,
If it remains colorless.

Humanity's festive palette – too tempting to forfeit
For the patinated medal of paternal pride.
My wife strikes ocular vibrancy into the weathered pale.
Her sweet Spanish words scratch the record of the family line,
Casting a spotlight on the chicken shit
Staining feet that came before mine.

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