

By Carol Becvarik

On this warm day in September 2006, I walk through the doorways of the old adobe palace into the courtyard touting a hurried pace to reach the print room. I listen to the talk about the antique printing presses; watch the demonstration of letter assemblage forming *MUSE*? Which is printed on a press from Estancia. Next I hastened to the *Lasting Impressions Exhibit*. Again I listen, take notes, observe. A workshop assignment is given to write for ten minutes taking from the exhibit phrases, shapes and colors. My brain is functioning to the commands I jibber to it. Seducing myself into writing a sterile dialogue of rhetoric to fulfill the assignment. I find a round brayer with blue paint rolled on it and the beautiful word of Rita Dove. The piece is written and read.

Next the group is sent to wander the rooms of the palace seeking something that draws us to it. I lead myself through the labyrinth of rooms trying to be drawn to what draws me. Nothing. I saw nothing until a gapping hole of exposed adobe pulls me towards it. Yes, I say to myself this is alive, the dirt of creation. My senses open. The smells of the walls, the textures of the surfaces, the mouth of history opens. My heart jumps, my feet are no longer connected to the plodding pattern of stopping in front of everything display. I move away from the other observers. A few steps and I am in the Chapel Room. I am drawn. There she is, The Lady in White. My pen races across my paper. "Who is writing this?" I ask in silence, "These are not my words. Are they the words from the spirit of all mothers? Are they the words of Mother Earth pleading? Are they our words?"

Lady in White

Lady in white – Oh Virgin Mother – you hold my prayers, you give me hope, my pain you sense. Hold me close to your breast let me to feel the pulse of life singing in my ear. I cry tears of joy knowing you are my deliverance. Oh Mother of all, give me strength to free my sorrow from this night of silence screams running through my body.

Are you there? Are you there when the owl screeches across my path leaving a cold wind from his wings steeping in my bones?

Oh Virgin Mother, I called out to the distance time when life found shape in my womb. You were there to gently carry me from my solitude to the fire field of love. Tonight I feel the red wine of life flowing from my womb, I hear the cries of my child leaving my safe hallow. Oh mother, sweet mother of mine.

Your downed eyes look away from me, your clasped hands turn me away, I reach for your feet. My hands slip from the white silk dress. In desperation I look upward searching for you gentle face. Only now do I see the black shroud hanging from you head.

Lady in White – Oh Virgin Mother – Must I go?

Sleep child, you will awaken again.

Museum As Muse

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