

SIBACOBY, AT NIGHT

*Espacios encimados,
montañas que separan
nuestra realidad despeñada
(...) el aura (...)
susurra eternamente
el mismo tono.*

- Mara Romero, *Identidad*.

*Overlapped spaces,
Mountains that separate
Our fallen reality
(...) the aura (...)
Whispers eternally
The same tune.*

- Mara Romero, *Identity*.

Young woman murders her attacker

Esperanza, Sonora, August 21st, 2006

Officials of the State Police arrested a teenager who appeared to have committed a homicide against a young man that intended to force her to have sexual relations with him, in an incident occurred in the land of Sibacoby, within the communal area Ejido Cócorit.

The arrested minor is Josefa Buitimea Gomez, 15 years old, with address in the Miravalle neighborhood in Obregon City. The corpse was identified as Luciano Valenzuela Murrieta, He was 31 years old and had his address in the neighborhood Eduardo Estrella, in Cócorit. The results of the autopsy in order to determine the causes of his death are still pending.

A relative of the teenager said that, around 01:00 of today, the girl together with the today deceased went for a horse ride, and after certain time they did not come back, therefore the relative decided to submit a missing person's report for the teenager girl.

After an intensive search in the region, Agents of the Justice Department located the teenage girl in the town of Cócorit, who, in her first statement, said that the man took her to such area and then tried to force her to sustain sexual relations. She narrated that, taking advantage of a distraction of the deceased, she took a thick wooden club and delivered several blows to his body and left the place on foot.

After getting to know this version, the Justice Department agents visited the place of the events and discovered the lifeless body of Valenzuela Murrieta and therefore immediately notified the Agent of Public Ministry, who took charge of the investigations.

“That’s not true”, said Josefa’s grandmother. “We were all at the party, here, on my house patio, as if it was a *ramada*, Luciano told the girl that if she wanted to see the ghost lady he would take her. The ghost of the old house, she appears in other places too, at the crooked tree and other places, there our Luciano took her. They are cousins, they are. But you see that Josefa’s mother is from Obregon and there they sent her, when she was a little girl, she doesn’t know a lot of things, the girl, things about us, that is why she is saying that she hit him, with her being so thin, that’s not true. The ghost is a *yaqui* woman, this is what is said, one of many that the *yori* people killed in this town. Almost always at the old house, but there’s people who say they saw her in the Hotel or at the crooked tree, but she is always around here, reminding us. The ghost lady laughs a lot when she frightens horses. Last night she laughed, we all heard her. Then the boy was clearly heard to shout ‘Damn horse!’. That frightened the horse, it turned mean and finished him off. That’s how it is when they are frightened, they don’t know their masters”.

“That’s not true”, said the bull tied to the raw wood of an improvised fence. “The one who finished the damn boy off wasn’t a horse, it was me. I clearly saw him jumping onto the girl and she tried to run. I know her by sight, I’ve seen her long, when she walks, when she carries the water to her grandmother’s house, when she comes and visits from Obregon. I’ve seen her long and, if it was up to me, I would marry her, but I was waiting for her to come of age. This damn boy overtook me. I transformed myself into a man, for him, I turned into the beast I am and I went up to him, I went very straight for him and I saw how she ran, without seeing either my face or this rope that was still hanging from my neck as the boy

shouted 'Damn horse' and the damn horse ran off".

"That's not true, I clearly saw goat legs sprout from the girl and how she started to kick the boy, once she found herself alone in the scrubland with him, near the crooked tree. She kicked him, laughing out loud. Then I felt all the blood run, the blood that has been spilled on my streets and my *plaza*. I felt that the boy was part of me, the girl wasn't. The trees were heavier than usual and it was difficult to breathe through them. The white haired logs of the cactus at the edge of my fertile soil pricked me and told me that a *yori* had crossed into our territory and was already causing us damage. The boy turned into a serpent, he didn't have a choice, and the girl grew even more fearful and kicked him harder. But the truth is the boy never attacked her. Nor did he die completely, just half-dead. And we know what happens when those who are serpents don't finish dying. Luciano accused the girl and she has to be punished".

"That's not true," said the girl when interrogated for the third time. "The truth is I was afraid of denouncing my Luciano and that's why I didn't tell you the truth. But now that you are showing him to me, with his face crooked and his legs broken, now I do know that he is dead and not alive somewhere else, fugitive and filled with guilt. What happened is that Luciano and I, we love each other very much, we were going to get married. We started kissing, he tickled me and I would laugh at his talk. Then another man showed up, a very big man, very strong. He started to hit him, to hit Luciano, and he had to defend himself, I handed him a thick wooden club and he used it until the other man fell, bloodied, his eyes open. We felt very afraid because we were sure the man was dead. The horse circled the crooked tree, a very big tree, 'Damn horse' shouted Luciano and the horse came and Luciano

climbed up on him. Don't be afraid and got to your grandma, he told to me. I have to go or I'll be jailed. So I had to return on foot, but I didn't know the way. So he came to me, riding the horse and said: get inside of this tree, it doesn't matter if you are half *yorí*, and I got into the tree. I walked under very high wood doors, everything very dark, very humid. While I was inside the tree I could hear Luciano's voice, so clearly, which was guiding me and I would answer him, he would tell me where to turn. When I came out it was day again, I came out of another tree, closer to home. Luciano was not there anymore, nobody knew where he was. That's why I don't know how he died, nor when".

"That's not true", says a voice in the dark every night since August 21st.
Soon after, you hear a horse whinny.

© *Cristina Rascon Castro (Sonora, México, 1976)*

From the short stories' book "Puede que un sahuaro seas tú / It could be that a sahuaro is you", 2010. Mexican Northwest Literature Prize in 2008.

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Translation notes:

Ramada: is an improvised roof made of branches. When there is a community party, the Yaqui people fashion such a roof and conduct storytelling under it, while eating a traditional banquet.

Yaqui: First Nation from the Sonora Dessert. Northwest Mexico. Yaqui people live in both Sonora, Mexico and in Arizona, USA.

Yorí: Originally, Yaqui people called the White people "yorí". Nowadays, Mestizos - who are mixed "yorí" and First Nation people - are also called "yorí".

Plaza: a central square.