

Negrito

Negrito ran with the pack under a bloated moon
empty bellies hunting trouble- the unsuspecting cat
on the prowl, the weak rat pulled from the crowd
the lone wolf who thinks he's better

and easier prey like disregarded garbage
treasure troves for a gang of mutts run wild
in the splintered shadows of Tepito
one of many of Mexico City's slums

far from bright lights and tourist sights
nothing here to visit, no one here to see
even the news stays away

and shadows run from a melting sun
the flip-flop sound of "chanclas" fleeing for cover

here colors bleed out muted over concrete gray
hard-red street stains that won't wash away

here you need a pack when things bite back
toothed and triggered, weary and walled

Negrito and gang don't go hungry
street smarts and speed their pedigree
ferocity and fear their state of being

nightly scuffles over prime choices
hairless patches tell many a tale
where winner takes all in dog-eat-dog
what remains scrounges for scraps

Negrito runs alongside other blacks
Los Morenos, Los Jarochos, Los Costeños
or simply *Los Negros*- the outcast and ignored
the fierce, the frightened, the defiant and deplored

here in Tepito, Mexico
where things run black

black as its markets and streets
black as gun powder and rotting meat
black as abandoned skin and mangy fur
black as a desperate night praying for the light

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