



Ode to Gloria Walking Home

R. Joseph Rodriguez

Gloria walks the borderlands barefoot
and soothes her body with ripened aloe vera.
Lavender and eucalyptus scent her long walk.
(Neither Cabeza de Vaca nor Thoreau are here.)

So many sisters wave across her homelands
as she inches her way across the fields and lomas and valles,
listening to the cantos of the chachalacas welcoming her home,
sure enough she will meet los antepasados and her descendants.

Gloria stops at the schools she attended years ago.
Her name's still etched boldly on desks and in books and stories:
GLORIA EVANGELINA ANZALDÚA
... carved deep in the spines and scribes' codices.
Her name waves like a ribbon in the sky and on earth
and flying flag-like across hemispheres and universes.

Gloria sits in deep meditation and reflection on the borderlands
as she turns pages and, like the tlacuilo, makes meaning of all that unfolds
in the worlds she inhabits and imagines for the people on a long walk home.

Gloria speaks languages that summon the people from their slumber
to act now in the present, to stand up taller and bravely in these times,
to make shields and armor and hope in the longest of hours and nights.

Gloria, sister, your name still sings in corridos and sonnets and stories
about wounds and scabs and scars in healing: some seen, some hidden.
Contigo, you whisper. Caminando se siembra y con hermandad.