

El Jarro

To think
water unlocked
its dusty secret
asleep inside its banded pot-belly
at Opa's antique shop
for who knows how long

a scent of buried history
gathers in our house
like a desert wind
the blast of stirred earth
invades our lungs
until our senses are reduced
to chips of geologic memory

on the table
this cool, Mexican jar
yields a taste
of the ancestry we have abandoned
future archeological digs will reveal
cultural exodus of massive numbers

bands of *Meshicas* forced to wander
between borders
between economies
prisoners of both
settling for whatever comes first

the blonde, blue-eyed, Twentieth century
will testify that we made great strides
but jails do not lie
welfare rolls do not lie
& graveyards are not silent

for now
we raise this round insignia
this chalice taken from the earth
from hand to hand
from thirst to thirst
reviving what it is to be useful
to be needed
to belong again
in the smallest of ways
which is all one ever wanted

***Meshica**—derived from an Aztec name for the first inhabitants of Mexico.*

***Metzlixichico**—a Nahuatl word meaning one from the belly-button of the moon—referring to the reflection of the moon in the lake of Tenochtitlán where the Aztecs settled in Mexico.*