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## From the Other Side of the Sea

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about the goings on,  
while the fishes in aquaria  
just stared wide-eyed,  
gulping everything.  
The elephants wrinkled their abundant  
grey matter,  
surmised there had been serious  
lessons in the past.  
But it had been so long  
since the last,  
they forgot.

MARRA PL. LANOT

### From the Other Side of the Sea

When you dance in the snow  
Like a ball of fire  
Lending hue to the sky  
That's an ashtray  
At three after noon,  
Remember your coat  
Was woven by us  
Your sisters in an  
Inferno factory  
On the edge of a shore  
At the other side  
Of the sea  
Where the sun  
Lights the dawn.

We gather the colors  
Of our land's  
Fishes and flowers  
For your beautiful coat  
Which everyone thought  
Sailed in from Peru  
Brazil or Mexico  
And not from our  
Penniless land.

Our fiery fingers  
Stitch the seams  
Sew the frills  
Tick like the second  
Hand of a clock,  
Our fingers burn  
For the infants we are  
Not allowed to bear,  
Our hands ache  
To press our babies  
To our breast  
Where no milk flows  
But we cannot for  
We continue to thread  
Sew and press  
The sunset rays  
For your coat  
So that you may dazzle  
In the snow.

And when heaven yawns  
At five and skyscrapers  
Glitter in the sky  
As you dance, dance  
Into the starless night,  
Remember us  
Your sisters who wove  
Your coat so warm  
And lovely as embers  
Crackling in the hearth,  
We lie silent  
Dazed with fatigue  
In our sardine-can shanty  
With not a thread on  
To absorb the sweat  
Off our bare  
Brown shoulders  
Or to still the twitching  
Of our tired fingers,  
Not even a lover's  
Arm for a pillow  
Since we were torn  
From our men who are kept  
In their own inferno

And we're supposed  
To be virgins  
Pawed by supervisors  
Managers, owners  
Of the giant furnace  
In this land that  
Heaves to the sun.

We dare not dream  
Of the mountains  
Of our birth, then  
Capped with trees  
And the flames of dawn  
But now a brown heap  
Of smoking twigs,  
We dare not recall  
The purring stream  
Of our unlived youth  
As we lie listening  
To the crickets chirring  
Like machines incessantly  
Whirring, reminding us  
That hours later  
We have to wake up  
To another day  
Of a thousand coats  
For our sisters  
On the other side  
Of the sea  
Before the sun  
Lights the dawn.