

The Facts of Life

(To President Bill Clinton on his inaugural January 1993)

Luis Rodriguez

Let me tell you the facts of life

From beneath the tattered coat of my country.

This country whose soul

Has died long before the body.

This country which is blurry eyed

From lack of dreaming yet full of sleep.

This country which is inebriated

With guilt and false grinning.

This country which is a beggar's song

Slithering through city veins.

This country which is night spewing

Over the crevices on the face of day.

This country of laughter & illumination

Across the ocean of lies where we drown.

This country which dances without a beat

In constant searching, constant rupturing.

This country which seethes, that is hungry,

And limps with ambiguity.

This country satiated with sweet odors & colors,

Yet stench & scrawled with race hatred.

This country where the road from Hope to hope

Must pass beyond expectation, beyond class privilege.

This country whose penitence is waiting

At the corner of Fury & Fire.