## **POETRY**

CHRYSTOS A Self-educated artist and writer, born to a native American Menominee father and a European mother. Proud lesbian for twenty-nine years.

From her book Dream On, Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, 1991.

## ALONE

IN THE QUEER BAR WITH ICE WATER THAT COST \$1.50 TWENTY YEARS AND HUNDREDS OF GIRLFRIENDS LATER I STILL

DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THIS

NEVER WILL

SO I ENJOY THE CLOSELY SWAYING WOMEN'S BODIES FLICKER OF SIMMERING DESIRE

IN THIS ONE PLACE WHERE WE CAN SORT OF BE OURSELVES

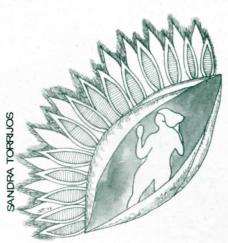
THAT IN EVERY TOWN IS ALWAYS SMOKY, TACKY & NOT QUITE CLEAN WHERE CLASS & RACE DIM SOMEWHAT IN RED SPINNING LIGHTS

A HAZE OF BOOZE

SOBER

THIS IS NOT MY HOME BUT THERE'S NO PLACE ELSE TO GO

IN A STRANGE CITY





## THE BORDER RAZOR

At u.s. customs nervous I know I'm going to be inspected because the rich american white couple in front of me match every nice tourist ad you've ever seen & the line behind me is all white

so I stick out like a sore red thumb after the hammer misses Holding my breath even though I know it makes it worse I move forward juggling sleeping bag, old jacket, worn suitcase & overflowing shopping bag

He wants my driver's license & punches me into his computer I panic

He reads for too long giving me too much time to wonder if a radical Indian activist can cross the border or an ex-mental patient or someone with a dusty but served iail record

I can't remember if Lesbians are illegal

Finally with a reluctant shrug & a piercing stare he lets me go

still suspicious he watches me stagger back to the bus I wonder how long until the time when I'll be kept & if I can speak what I'll say in my defense

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