

# POETRY

**CHRYSTOS** ▲ 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



SANDRA TORRIJOS

## 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 jail 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



SANDRA TORRIJOS