

**PARK SLOPE**

**LOURDES VÁZQUEZ**

**DP**

## Acknowledgements

Mi gente,

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Later in Park Slope

I showed you the *barrio*,

Its little streets, the brownstones and their roofs,

the hundreds of skylights,                      the stoop sales.

All the while I was searching how

to say good bye.

You cannot get intimate with a skeleton.

Your long, thin hand,  
your small lackluster head.

Park Slope sparkling  
like a new piece of furniture.

You undressed.

I wanted to think I was having a bad dream  
until I awoke next to you.

I was fortunate when you disappeared.

Days later you assured me  
of the good days gone by.

I did not stop to tell you how mistaken you were.

“Are we inside the fog or outside?” You asked.

“Inside.” I responded.

Like upside-down cats, we snuck away  
from the dew and the clouds.

The lamp-post lit the few open bars and  
the anxiety in my face knowing that you were recovering.

What I said, I did no voice.

    You would not have wanted to know the truth.

        Saying it face to face, the words carry so much weight,  
    while you caress my skin.

“So soft”. You said.

I created the words with the aroma of pine.

    So you would not suddenly die.

The only thing remaining was the park and a policeman walking his dog.



My eyes, body and ears wanted to sneak away from your death.  
How it surrounds you and you manage to live with her  
with the resignation of a married man.

The sunrise was the only sure thing,  
Park Slope with its mass of brownstones and gardens.

To close my eyes.

Let memory disappear.

Let time cease and my sheets never remember.

Days later doves fly over the roofs.  
Children play hopscotch drawn with colored chalk.

They cast the numbers with:

One miniature book

An English liquor bottle

A shell

an obituary of an exuberant Puerto Rican.

Park Slope reflected in the fish aquarium

And above the clouds.

“July was no longer...”

Henri Deluy

June begins and ends in a day  
like a winter lottery  
June is green, people seeking vegetables,  
herbs and fruits in the farmer’s market.  
June and I observing the aromatic garden  
of the neighbor. His grapevine,  
Old Rocamadour resting from fevers in a Paris Street.

The brownstones’ facades, the Egyptian statues,  
observe my becoming sad this June.

The Montauk Club witnesses this terror.

Interested in history

    You ran to read the plaques  
        on the buildings and light-posts  
where Park Slope chronicles are narrated.

Each one containing

    a new definition of the word fear.

“Your prowess in bed?”

It’s my own curiosity that insists on asking.

You were so hopeful.

Crazy me, wanting to believe.

In the midst of Park Slope  
let someone be hopeful.

The woman has come to clean the apartment

Flowers, candles, incense,

Decorations.

Flowers. Flowers. Flowers.

“Can you give me a glass of milk?”

You asked for a glass of milk.

To be confused with your mother

was a deception.



To eat. Shrimps and homemade bread.  
Eggplants bursting purple.  
To drink fresh wine, a cold vermouth.

Here in Park Slope.

There in San Juan.

With my mother  
or with another.

This story is a fantasy  
a dream with vegetables melting  
through the brownstones gutters.

A lie. I say.  
An illusion.

The Prague Palace  
With its marionette theater  
    You and **I** on the terrace  
        Watching bats lashing the moon

In the land of the dead.  
    **I,**  
so full of life.