

Old Man

by Ricardo Sánchez

remembrance (smiles/hurts sweetly)

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old man
with brown skin
talking of past
 when being shepherd
 in utah, nevada, colorado and new mexico
was life lived freely;

old man,
 grandfather,
wise with time
running rivulets¹ on face,
deep, rich furrows,
 each one a legacy,
deep, rich memories
of life . . .

 “you are indio,²
 among other things,”
he would tell me
 during nights spent
so long ago
 amidst familial gatherings
 in albuquerque . . .
old man, loved and respected,
he would speak sometimes

1. **rivulets** (RIHV-yoo-lihts) *n. pl.* little streams

2. **indio** (EEN-dee-yoh) *adj.* Indian



Old Man Poem - Text

of pueblos,³
 san juan, santa clara,
 and even santo domingo,
and his family, he would say,
came from there:
 some of our blood was here,
 he would say,
 before the coming of coronado,⁴
other of our blood
 came with los españoles,⁵
and the mixture
was rich,
 though often painful . . .

old man,
who knew earth
 by its awesome aromas
and who felt
the heated sweetness
 of chile verde⁶
by his supple touch,
gone into dust is your body
 with its stoic look and resolution,
but your reality, old man, lives on
in a mindsoul touched by you . . .

Old Man . . .

3. **pueblos** (PWEHB-lohz) *n. pl.* towns, villages; also people or nations. The reference here is to Native American pueblos in central and northern New Mexico.

4. **coronado** (koh-roh-NAH-doh) Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, Spanish explorer in the 1500s who led an expedition into what is now Arizona and New Mexico

5. **los españoles** (lohs ays-pahn-NYOHL-ays) *n. pl.* the Spaniards

6. **chile verde** (CHEE-lay VAIR-day) green pepper

Mexican American Literature, edited by Virginia Seeley, Globe Book Company, NJ, 1993.

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