

Translate

By **Mario de la Cruz**

This is everything I wanted to say

It's all of the words I never could have said

When I lost the ability to speak clearly,

You did it for me

Found you accidentally,

Something I thought was hidden from me

Pieces of a puzzle that never quite fit,

There was more to the picture even though I couldn't see it yet

Narrate to Translate

Explicate the meaning according to me

Extricate the meaning from the experience

It was all there in the text

The letters that once stood apart (on their own)

Joined together to form little battalions

Stringing together creating an army of knowledge

Expressing the authenticity of me

In the clearest way I ever could have hoped to be seen

For once my reflection was exactly who I thought I was
Because I wasn't looking in the mirror anymore
It was on the page
And now I had the chance to recreate
The memories of what I could never speak about before
Opening the door to see my own reality
Unafraid and unfiltered but mediated
Creating an opportunity to see things from a new perspective

Being understood was a new experience
Working my way from the inside out
Instead of always waiting for the outside to be able to define this
Autonomous
Taking back my power and using my words to decipher the hidden codes in my silence
Making space for the new dialogue that needed to be said
Pulled forth from my heart and my head
Spilling my abstract emotions into the physical
Spitting out the truth right from the initial
Leaving drops behind to trace back the path to pieces of my reality
By those who are ready to receive me

Let it marinate
From on the skin into the flesh
Penetrate deeper through the tissue
Into the bone
Passing through cell walls
Until it originates in the DNA
Bonded and unseen by the naked eye
But ever present, just like the soul
When word and feeling become one
In a marriage orchestrated by authenticity
And presided over by empathy

More than simple interpretation of imagination
This is a process which is not always easy to digest
But the discomfort is outweighed by the benefits
Because the freedom associated in speaking aloud with
Newfound confidence,
With better understanding of one's experience
Is worth more than the fear of losing anonymity
The key is creating a net of support and safety
That respects the veracity of speech with integrity

(Now I'm)

Finding new purpose for words that at first Narrate

Then go beyond simple use to Articulate

Becoming building blocks to Advocate

And now have the power and responsibility to Translate

From my lips to your ears,

From my thoughts to your thoughts,

My interior to your exterior

And reflecting back into me again

Bringing our worlds closer into each other

Where they meet and coexist

Retaining their uniqueness

But now utilizing common language

Sharing lenses

Lending themselves to being seen as they are

Without pretense or boundaries

Do you hear me now?

Do you see me now?

Do you feel me now?

And if you still can't grasp my meaning use what's left of your senses

To breathe me in

And taste my essence,

Sweet like sincerity
With a hint of hope,
A dash of individuality
And a pinch of possibility
Once you've taken it all in
We start again.

Mario de la Cruz, an editor at the Intima, holds an M.S. in Narrative Medicine from Columbia University. He completed his undergraduate studies in Sociology at Arizona State University and has developed multiple HIV/AIDS prevention programs and sexual health education programs for both healthcare institutions and non-profit organizations, with emphasis on at-risk youth groups. Mario is also a contributing author to the book, The Uncharted Path from Clinic-Based to Community-Based Research. His current work is in exploring visual, oral and performance based narratives.