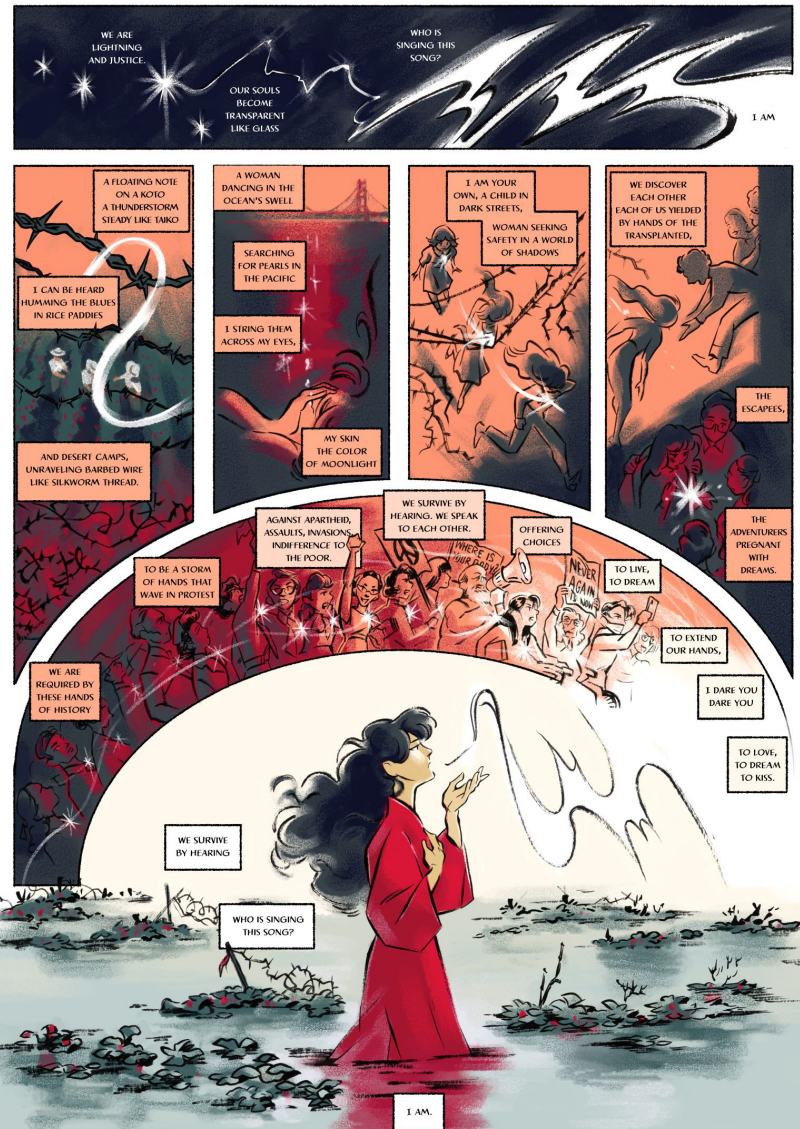


A.C. Esguerra

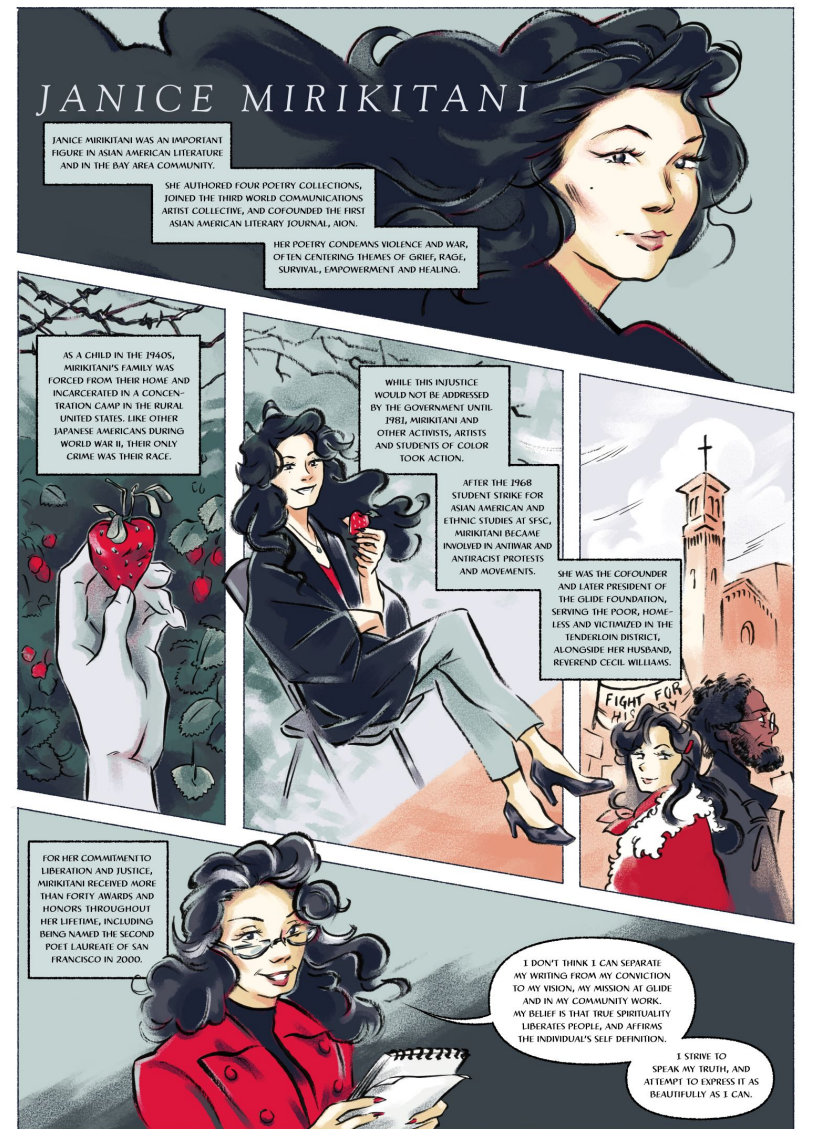
San Francisco: The City of Poets



sfac

The Art on Market Street Poster Series is a project of the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

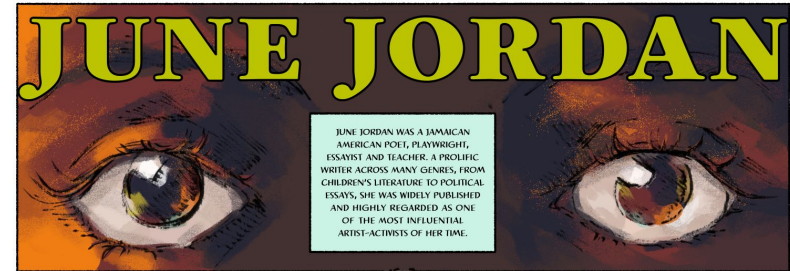
Poetry by Janice Mirikitani, from "Who Is Singing This Song?" and "Breaking Silence", Shedding Silence, 1987. Art © A.C. Esquerre 2022 | blueludebar.com | @blueludebar



sfac

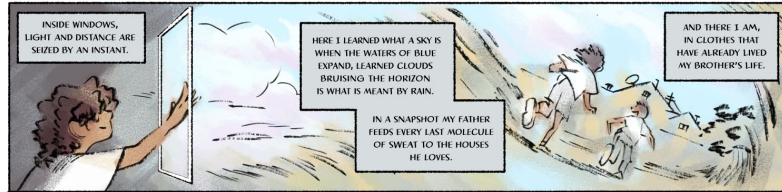
The Art on Market Street Poster Series is a project of the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

Poetry by Janice Mirikitani, from "Who Is Singing This Song?" and "Breaking Silence", Shedding Silence, 1987. Art © A.C. Esquerre 2022 | blueludebar.com | @blueludebar



JUNE JORDAN WAS A JAMAICAN AMERICAN POET, PLAYWRIGHT, ESSAYIST AND TEACHER. A PROLIFIC WRITER ACROSS MANY GENRES, FROM CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TO POLITICAL ESSAYS, SHE WAS WIDELY PUBLISHED AND HIGHLY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ARTIST-ACTIVISTS OF HER TIME.





VICTOR MARTINEZ





I ASKED A WATERBUFFALO WHAT'S UP WATCHING IT GATHER UP SHREDS OF MANILA/TOWN DREAMS

WHERE ARE ALL THE MANONGS?

"THEY'RE DEAD AND GONE, NONE OF THEM LEFT!"



HERE AND THERE ARE TRACES OF FISH IN BROWN HANDS HANG ON

I MADE IT TO MANILATOWN, THE PEOPLE HERE CAN NAME EVERY FISH BACK HOME

THEY SANG SONGS ALL NIGHT WAITING SO LONG FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL



...I AM KEARNY STREET & THE BROWN FEET OF MANONGS TREADING POOL HALL DREAMS—EMPTY POCKETS OF ECHOING SADNESS IN THE PIT OF LONELY CARABAO BELLIES—I AM INTERNATIONAL-ST. PAUL—SIESTA ROYAL HOTEL TOMATO SARDINES UNDER WARM AUNT TRESSES—AKO AY PILIPINO—I AM PILIPINO—

SLICK BLACK HAIR COMBED STRAIGHT BACK WITH A LITTLE WAVE TO CATCH THE PINAY'S EYE—PERFUMED WITH NELSÓN'S POMADE—THE FLORENSE'S SHOES POLISHED REFLECTING THE PINAY'S POMPADOUR—AKO AY PILIPINO—I AM PILIPINO—ON THE DANCE FLOOR WITH BLACK-GRAY PINSTRIP SUITS STRETCHED OUT SLICK & COOL—AKO AY PILIPINO—

DIMAS ALANG—AT THE CHRISTENING ADOBBO & PANSI & ISDA—LICK THE LEMON ON THE FISH...DANCE TO THE FACES & EYES & FEET OF PILIPINO CHILDREN...DANCE TO ETANG, ETANG, ETANG STROKING MY HAIR FILLED WITH CARABAO TAE—DANCE TO MY NANAY IN THE PILIPINO SKY—DANCE TO THE PILIPINO STRUGGLING IN THE CITIES & FARMS OF AMERICA—AKO AY PILIPINO—I AM PILIPINO



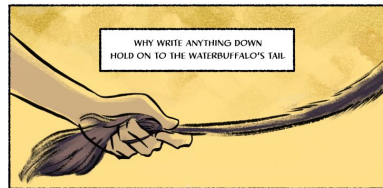
WHO COULD HAVE CAUSED THE MANONGS SUCH PAIN?

I REMEMBER THE RAINS RUNNING DOWN THEIR FACES

OH, HOW THEY CAN LAUGH OH, HOW THEY CAN LAUGH

THEY NEVER HAD TIME FOR BOOKS YET THEY CAN READ THE WATER RAINS

WHAT IS THIS PLACE THEY CALL HOME



WHY WRITE ANYTHING DOWN HOLD ON TO THE WATERBUFFALO'S TAIL



BEFORE IT SLIPS AWAY.

All Robbles



AL ROBLES WAS A FILIPINO AMERICAN POET AND ACTIVIST FROM THE HILMORE DISTRICT.

HIS ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY WORK CENTERED ON THE MANONGS, THE ELDERLY FILIPINOS OF SAN FRANCISCO'S MANILATOWN AND CHINATOWN.

ROBLES RECORDED OVER 100 TAPES OF THE MANONGS RECOUNTING STORIES FROM THEIR LIVES.

PARTS OF THESE TRUE AND TALL TALES INSPIRED HIS POETRY COLLECTION, RAPPIN' WITH TEN THOUSAND CARABAO IN THE DARK.



IT WAS THE 1960S WHEN ROBLES VISITED THE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY HOTEL ROOMS THAT THE MANONGS CALLED HOME TO GIVE THEM FOOD, MEDICINE AND COMPANY...

...BUT THE MANONGS' STORIES CAME FROM THEIR YOUTH IN THE 1920S AND 30S, WHEN THEY HAD FIRST IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES.

MANY HAD WORKED AS PART OF THE MULTI-ETHNIC LABOR FORCE THAT, OFTEN UNDER EXPLOITATIVE AND ABUSIVE CONDITIONS, TRANSFORMED THE CENTRAL VALLEY INTO THE AGRICULTURAL CENTER IT IS TODAY.



ROBLES WAS ALSO PART OF THE FIGHT TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF THESE ELDERLY FROM GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT. BUT IN 1979, THE FIGHT WAS LOST. ALL RESIDENTS OF THE I-HOTEL WERE EVICTED AND THE BUILDING WAS DEMOLISHED.

BY THE TIME A NEW STRUCTURE TOOK ITS PLACE OVER 25 YEARS LATER, MOST OF THE MANONGS HAD EITHER DISPERSED OR PASSED AWAY.



THE WAY THIS GENERATION OF SURVIVORS ENDURED HARDSHIP AND MADE THEMSELVES ANEW IN AMERICA, ALL WHILE REMEMBERING THEIR ROOTS, IS DOCUMENTED AND MYTHOLOGIZED IN AL ROBLES' POETRY.

HIS WORDS FLOW FREE AND WILD, LIKE JAZZ MUSIC, A RIVER, OR MEMORY ITSELF.

THE BEST PART OF OUR POETRY IS OUR STRUGGLE, AND THE BEST PART OF OUR STRUGGLE IS OUR POETRY.

WE HAVE A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR PEOPLE, AND A COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN, BY CREATING SOMETHING NEW—THROUGH POETRY.

EACH GENERATION IMPROVES THE WORLD FOR THE NEXT. MY GRANDPARENTS WILLED ME STRENGTH. MY PARENTS WILLED ME PRIDE.

BUT I GIVE YOU A LEGACY OF DOERS

THESE BE THE THINGS I PASS TO YOU MY DAUGHTER

OF PEOPLE WHO TAKE RISKS TO CHISEL THE CRACK WIDER.

TAKE THE STRENGTH THAT YOU MAY

WAGE A LONG BATTLE.

TAKE THE PRIDE THAT YOU CAN

NEVER STAND SMALL.

TAKE THE RAGE THAT YOU CAN

NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS.

I WILL TO YOU RAGE. I GIVE YOU A WORLD INCOMPLETE

LET THE WORLD STAND SCREAMING. YOU WILL MUTE THEIR VOICES WITH YOUR LIFE.

A WORLD WHERE WOMEN STILL ARE PROPERTY AND CHATTEL WHERE COLOR STILL SHUTS DOORS WHERE SEXUAL CHOICE STILL THREATENS

I, WOMAN, I CAN NO LONGER CLAIM

A MOTHER OF FLESH A FATHER OF MARROW

I, WOMAN, MUST BE THE CHILD OF MYSELF.

PAT PARKER

PAT PARKER GREW UP IN A RURAL AREA OUTSIDE HOUSTON IN THE 1950S. EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH RACIAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE LEFT AN IMPACT ON HER WRITING, WHICH IS UNCOMPROMISING AND BLUNT, YET ALSO VULNERABLE, RAW AND PRECISE.

IN SAN FRANCISCO, PARKER CAME INTO HER OWN AS A LESBIAN AND FEMINIST POET AND ACTIVIST. SHE WORKED WITH THE BLACK WOMEN'S REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, BERKELEY GAY WOMEN'S LIBERATION, OAKLAND FEMINIST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER AND, LATER IN LIFE, THE UNITED NATIONS, REPORTING ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN GHANA AND KENYA.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, SHE MOVED TO CALIFORNIA FOR COLLEGE.

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF DIRTY JOBS.

AS PART OF THE WOMEN'S PRESS COLLECTIVE, SHE ORGANIZED REGULAR POETRY READINGS WITH OTHER LESBIAN FEMINIST POETS ALL OVER THE WEST COAST.

SHE PUSHED FOR WOMEN POETS TO BE GIVEN SPACE TO PERFORM—AND BE PAID FOR THEIR TIME AND LABOR.

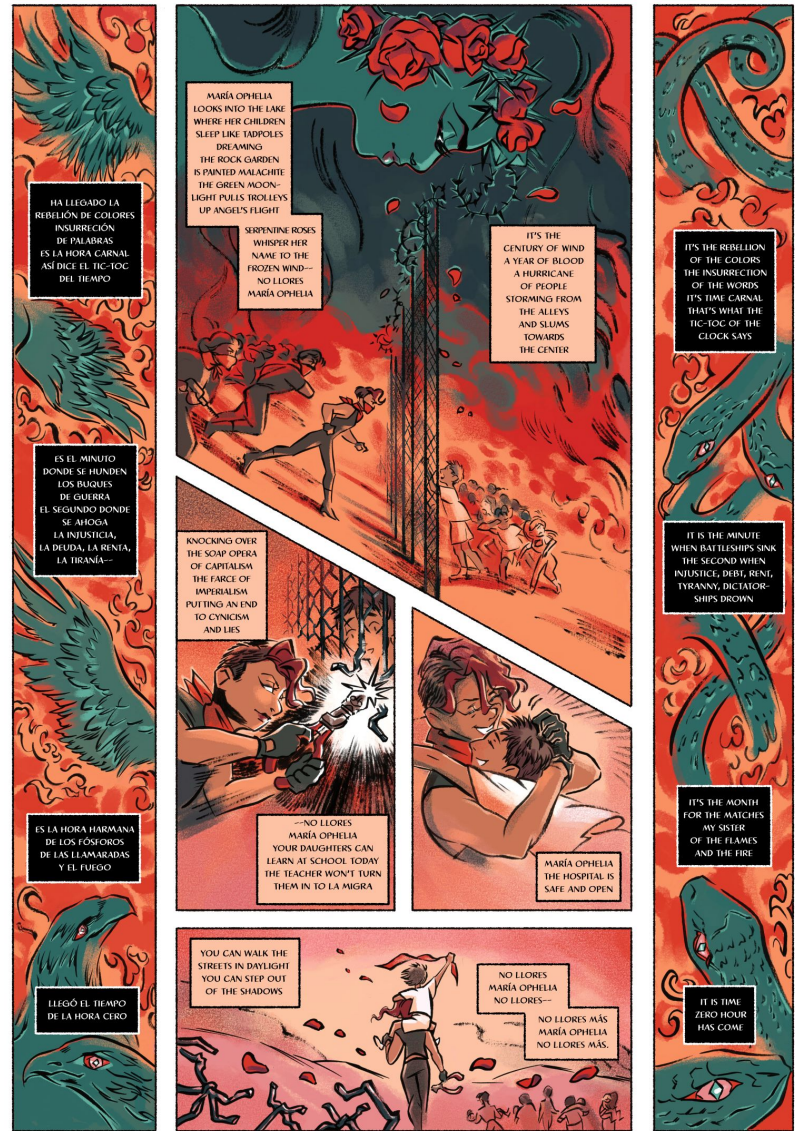
SHE ALSO RAISED TWO CHILDREN WITH HER PARTNER, MARTY DUNHAM. AS A BIRACIAL LESBIAN COUPLE IN THE 1970S, THE FAMILY FACED MISCONCEPTIONS AND JUDGMENT FROM OTHERS AROUND THEM.

SOME OF PARKER'S POEMS ARE DEDICATED TO HER DAUGHTERS, TEACHING THEM STRENGTH AGAINST PREJUDICE AND HATE.

A LINE FROM PARKER'S POEM "MY LADY AIN'T NO LADY" DESCRIBES HER POWER WELL: "SHE ENTERS AND HER PRESENCE IS FELT/SHE DOESN'T SIT SMALL—/ SHE TAKES HER SPACE."

I AM A REVOLUTIONARY FEMINIST BECAUSE I WANT ME TO BE FREE, AND IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOU WHO ARE HERE, THAT YOUR COMMITMENT TO REVOLUTION IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT YOU WANT REVOLUTION FOR YOURSELF.

IF I DIED TOMORROW AND WHAT COULD BE SAID ABOUT MY LIFE IS YES, SHE WROTE BOOKS AND SHE WROTE POETRY AND PEOPLE LIKED IT, THAT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH. THAT'S NOT WHY I TAKE THE RISKS THAT I DO.



HA LLEGADO LA REBELIÓN DE COLORES INSURRECCIÓN DE PALABRAS ES LA HORA CARNAL ASÍ DICE EL TIC-TOC DEL TIEMPO

ES EL MINUTO DONDE SE HUNDEN LOS BUQUES DE GUERRA EL SEGUNDO DONDE SE ARDE LA INJUSTICIA, LA DEUDA, LA RENTA, LA TIRANÍA—

ES LA HORA HERMANA DE LOS FÓFOROS DE LAS LLAMARADAS Y EL FUEGO

LLEGÓ EL TIEMPO DE LA HORA CERO

MARÍA OPHELIA LOOKS INTO THE LAKE WHERE HER CHILDREN SLEEP LIKE TADPOLES DREAMING THE ROCK GARDEN IS PAINTED MALACHITE THE GREEN MOON-LIGHT PULSES TROLLEYS UP ANGELS' FLIGHT

SERPENTINE ROSES WHISPER HER NAME TO THE FROZEN WIND— NO LOORES MARÍA OPHELIA

IT'S THE CENTURY OF WIND A YEAR OF BLOOD A HURRICANE OF PEOPLE STORMING FROM THE ALLEYS AND SLUMS TOWARDS THE CENTER

KNOCKING OVER THE SCAM OPERA OF CAPITALISM THE FARCE OF IMPERIALISM PUTTING AN END TO CYNICISM AND LIES

—NO LOORES MARÍA OPHELIA YOUR DAUGHTERS CAN LEARN AT SCHOOL TODAY THE TEACHER WON'T TURN THEM IN TO LA MIGRA

MARÍA OPHELIA THE HOSPITAL IS SAFE AND OPEN

YOU CAN WALK THE STREETS IN DAYLIGHT YOU CAN STEP OUT OF THE SHADOWS

NO LOORES MARÍA OPHELIA NO LOORES—

NO LOORES MÁS MARÍA OPHELIA NO LOORES MÁS.

IT'S THE REBELLION OF THE COLORES THE INSURRECTION OF THE WORDS IT'S TIME CARNAL THAT'S WHAT THE TIC-TOC OF THE CLOCK SAYS

IT IS THE MINUTE WHEN BATTLESHIPS SINK THE SECOND WHEN INJUSTICE, DEBT, RENT, TYRANNY, DICTATORSHIPS DROWN

IT'S THE MONTH FOR THE MATCHES MY SISTER OF THE FLAMES AND THE FIRE

IT IS TIME ZERO HOUR HAS COME

sfac

The Art on Market Street Poster Series is a project of the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

Poetry by Alejandro Murguía, from "Ahora Fuego/Fire Now" and "María Ophelia". *Snap Poems*, 2014. Art © A.C. Esquerre 2022 | blueuldebar.com | @blueuldebar

ALEJANDRO MURGUIA



AS A CHILD, ALEJANDRO MURGUIA MOVED FROM NORTH HOLLYWOOD TO MEXICO CITY, TIJUANA AND BACK TO SOCIAL MOVING BETWEEN COUNTRIES GAVE HIM "LINGUISTIC SHOCK"—A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT.

BUT HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO READ A LOT AND, IN TIME, RECOVERED THE ABILITY TO SPEAK.

POETRY IS HOW I STAY ALIVE, HOW I NAVIGATE THE DARK HOURS OF THE NIGHT.

I COME TO POETRY OUT OF NECESSITY IN A WAY, OUT OF AN URGENT NEED TO DEFINE WHO I AM BUT ALSO AS A WAY TO GIVE VOICE TO MY COMMUNITY.

MURGUIA ARRIVED IN SAN FRANCISCO IN THE 1970S, WHEN HE WAS AROUND 20 YEARS OLD. A POET AND A CULTURAL WORKER, HE ORGANIZED READINGS WITH THE THIRD WORLD COMMUNICATIONS WRITERS COLLECTIVE AND ALSO HELPED TO START THE MISSION CULTURAL CENTER, BECOMING ITS FIRST DIRECTOR IN 1976.

LIKE OTHER MISSION ARTISTS OF THAT TIME, HE WAS INFLUENCED BY THE GENERATION OF LATIN AMERICAN WRITERS CALLED "THE BOOM" AND STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT POETRY CAN GENERATE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE.

HE PUBLISHED THE SOUTHERN FRONT, A BOOK ABOUT HIS TIME AS A SOLDIER IN NICARAGUA...

...AND THIS WAR CALLED LOVE: LOVE STORIES IN THE MISSION, BOTH WON, THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD.

HE BECAME A PROFESSOR OF LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE AT SESU AND EVENTUALLY THE 12TH POET LAUREATE OF SAN FRANCISCO—THE FIRST ONE TO BE LATINO AND BILINGUAL, WRITING IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH.

YOU DON'T NEED A PROFESSOR OF LITERARY THEORY TO DECONSTRUCT ANY POETRY FOR YOU. IT DOESN'T GIVE A LINGUAL OR LINGUA HOW IT EXPRESSES ITSELF AS LONG AS IT REMAINS TRUE TO THE WORD.

NEVER FORGET THAT SAN FRANCISCO IS THE CITY OF POETS—

THEREFORE, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU IS A POET UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE.

sfac

The Art on Market Street Poster Series is a project of the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

Poetry by Alejandro Murguía, from "Ahora Fuego/Fire Now" and "María Ophelia". *Snap Poems*, 2014. Art © A.C. Esquerre 2022 | blueuldebar.com | @blueuldebar