

*Mija Magazine is proud to bring in the Column of the Americas! 4/04*



## **COLUMN of the AMERICAS**

by Patrisia Gonzales  
and Roberto Rodriguez

*Patrisia and Roberto are salt-of-the-earth writers. They understand the past struggles of our ancestors and see how issues in our society today are affecting what they worked so long and hard to protect, so we can strive on to perfect.*

### **AMOR REVOLUCIONARIO (REVOLUTIONARY LOVE) A first-person column by Patrisia Gonzales.**

I once fell in love with a voice over the radio that woke me up each morning with words of love for his people.

I once loved a man because he could sing 101 songs in the fields as he worked as a farm worker.

I loved another because he had a laugh that embraced all those around him, though he had been tortured.

These men, I loved for their acts. I loved them, as I have loved others, for the stories they gave me. They were not meant nor destined for romantic love. I shared with them "revolutionary love."

And then I began to love a man page by page, from a book he wrote about surviving death and disappearance. His revolutionary love called out to me, and I married him. Revolutionary love does not have to lead to romance, though when the two arrive together, their marriage makes the relationship a destiny. This alchemy of revolution of spirit and matter and love has helped us endure the hard times in a relationship that seemed to defy reason. Learning to love became my act against oppression.

Mexican freedom-fighter Benita Galeana first taught me about revolutionary love. She was nearing 90 and had a houseful of men and women who adored her and pampered her. Emissaries from freedom struggles the world over paid her visits. Of the men, especially, she'd say, "Ellos me tienen amor revolucionario!" (They have revolutionary love for me!)

Che Guevara once said that true revolutionaries were motivated by love. While living in Mexico City, I got to shake Nelson Mandela's hands after his release from prison. Madiba's hands were big and strong, and I felt the revolutionary love for his people that kept him alive while imprisoned for decades on Robben Island.

Even those of us who are not freedom fighters can love in a revolutionary way because of our love for doing what is just and good. "Amor revolucionario" is the love I have for the people organized to transform their conditions and for all people anywhere who are treated inhumanely. It is a love for freedom and a passion for a different kind of life than what's accepted as normal.

Once, while having dinner with some comrades, we had an intense discussion about acting with love. They said they did things with love. I said I cannot love everyone, but as a Buddhist, I can have compassion for everyone. Love, for me, is inspired by some kind of deeper relationship. But I do love certain people, sometimes from first sight, because of how they live. I love men and women with revolutionary love because they give me hope for the possibility of change. I love them as brothers and sisters, and sometimes not at all like that, but as simply men and women who dare take a stand.

Perhaps revolutionary love is biochemical and molecular and releases endorphins like romantic love and chocolate. And it is deeply spiritual. In this country, romantic love and lust are glamorized by Hollywood. It's a sugary love, scantily clad and drunk with illusions that allow people to accept the deceit of comforts. Revolutionary love is coarse dark chocolate, ground with cinnamon and chile, and a truth that makes you naked. And it's just a bit bitter.

Revolutionary love, like Love, can sting. It can keep you up at night because of unrequited ideals. You can go hungry because of it. It can blind you with anger, causing you to strike out and judge others because you can no longer tolerate life's contradictions (so why can they?). Or because what you have sacrificed for what seems impossible and illusive. It can drive you crazy -- I know many who have succumbed to what Roberto calls "revolutionary madness."

I believe our lives are a love story -- to love ourselves, to love what we do, and to search for purpose so that we can love how we live. For those of us who have survived injustices and violence, to love is a primal, everyday act against injustice. For all revolutionary love leads back to our souls for the revolution that begins inside of us, so that we can begin to love, and change.