

confetti

On October 2, 1968, over 300 protesting students and civilians were killed by police and soldiers in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, Tlatelolco, Mexico City. The slogan *El dos de octubre no se olvida* [The second of October will not be forgotten] is still used in graffiti and at protest marches throughout Mexico. Those responsible have never been brought to justice.

I am covered with confetti
and I cannot forget the *dos de octubre* –
 bullets and bayonets
 students and bystanders
 the six year old shot while
 waking a playmate from the dead.

Slow blood took your place
when you were spirited away;
we do not know if you crossed
with hate on your lips.
Your loved ones only locate you
with prayers and *cempazúchitl**.

I bear my marigold wreath thinking of you.
Brown women snowed welcome on my head,
draped it over my neck.
My shape lies on the concrete
outlined in paper, clipped, dyed.
It marks where I was,
 you aren't.

I will make an offering –
I give my *cempazúchitl* to you,
 to all of you.
I remember, but
I remember that it will not bring you back.

I breathe in the marigold and imagine:

we will throw down confetti,

model your form on this ground,

welcome you back

with the kindness of strangers.

May you be reborn, I pray,

with love in your mouth

and hole-punched paper in your hair.

* *Cempazúchitl* [Nahuatl for 'marigolds'] are flowers traditionally placed on gravestones and altars on Mexico's Day of the Dead, celebrated on 2 November.

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