

Jovita Prays

by [Carlos Carreon](#) (June 2023)



Two Old Pecan Trees, Frank Nelson Wilcox, 1932

Pecan trees shade sidewalk
branches tap one another
in marigold morning
September breeze

clack slapping pecans fall
from their pungent, split dry pods
bounce onto sprigs of grass, tall as aloe vera,
onto garden hosed wet pavement,
onto muddy loose gravel

neighbor from around corner
picks up handfuls
packs them into pale pink nylon *costales*,
into empty pockets

He steps into dry weed rose bush bed
where nuts lay under thorns
like a nest of brown spotted house-finch eggs

disregarding yard sign

Por Favor

No Recoja Nueces

Why is there a sign?
Hand painted sign, dripping letters
like on a mourning widow's cheek

La viejita who lives in this
paint flaking house is crazy

*Señal ridícula: una cosecha tan abundante
que ruega ser compartida*

Ridiculous sign—such bountiful crop
begging to be shared

Besides, what is an old woman
going to do with all these nuts?
Pulling loaded wagon
I'm doing her a favor
She can't bend over
She can't mow her lawn,
ni puede mantener un jardín

Ella es buena con la manguera
She's good at using garden hose.
And off he goes.

In late afternoon

After reciting rosary prayers
Our Fathers, Hail Marys and
a *Por la señal de la Santa Cruz.*

Jovita—Dueña de la casita
squeezes through doorway
wicker basket between waist and forearm

Lavender floral terry cloth slippers
She moves slowly under ramas.

Searches her yard, her garden,
her sidewalk, the street in front of her home.

Shrugs, surrenders to stolen crop
heads back to house

Beneath fluttering paper
are seven pecans.

Gathering them with cupped hands,
hands brown and spotted as shell,
hands deeply creased as seed,
inhales their earthy scent

Smiling—both upper front teeth missing
pushes tongue out like a toothless baby.

Lifting pecans to forehead
Jovita whispers "*Gracias a Dios.*"

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