

CHANGING GEOGRAPHIES

Silvia Cuevas-Morales

Migration

People from the past

you can no longer hug

Evoking moments

streets, squares, faces

Things you can no longer touch

People from one's childhood

- doesn't matter if they're dead or alive...

You can no longer see them

hear or speak to them

in real time

Conversations are hurried

letters arrive too late

Only photographed faces stare

fixed in a lost space

Three of us survived

as we made Australia home

Away from bloody dictators

ignorant of humanitarian rights

still not paying for their wrongs

Mother lost her battle with cancer

and left us to cope alone

Perhaps she went back to Santiago

to the Andes, to her own Chilean ghosts

Always looking for something
I left my Melbourne, my city of Fitzroy
Now my only two relatives exist in the distance
My sister in Northcote
My father in Maribyrnong

And in this circular journey
I feel closer to my Chilean heart
for here they speak my language
But funny ... now I long
for a bit of my Aussie land

Caught in the middle of a map
trying to hold on to a cartographer's hand
Changing jobs, houses, languages
leaving lovers behind

Being the foreigner
the 'wog'
the 'sudaca'
Never fitting in the new land

Changing geographies
running from the past
But some nights ghosts haunt me
and beg me to go back

And I surround myself with memories
cheap mementoes
of things gone by
that only survive in my memory
for in reality, they are no longer alive

But distance is real
gradually,
one does grow apart



Silvia Cuevas-Morales was born in Chile and in 1975 migrated to Australia where she completed her tertiary studies and became an Australian citizen. In 1999 she migrated to Spain to live with her lover. Her poems have been published in Australia, USA and Spain.

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