

CARMEN LOMAS GARZA

Tito's Gig on the Moon, 2002
Oil and Alkyd on Canvas, 48 x 36 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST. PHOTO: M. LEE FATHERREE

LUIS J. RODRIGUEZ

This Love

(for Trini)

This love is not what you think love is...

This love is not to be messed with, misunderstood or underestimated

This love is not a stairway or a feather or a lingering doubt

This love is oatmeal breakfasts, walks with our dog, holding hands in the mall, kissing every time as if it were our first, opening the doors to our visiting sons

This love is her laughing at my unfunny jests—and me floored by her clever ones

This love is admiring the way our brains work, our hearts feel, our skin responds, how our voices ignite a pulsing breath from a longing depth

This love is respect squared, dignity shared, a steel railing over rustic steps, a dry alcove when it rains

It's an eternal locomotive of caring, what rustling a tranquil breeze unleashes, the way a sunbeam flickers on a rushing stream

This love is afternoon *raspadas*, whispers in the park, Ferris wheel rides, a stroll in a darkened museum

It's a madjoyscreamingbinge—intoxicated with auras of faces when we're not there, and how teardrops rip open the heart's flesh when we are

This love cannot be colorized, hung out to dry or pushed off the road

It's not a bookmark, a clock without hands or the white of your eyes

What you think this love is, it's probably not.

Luis J. Rodriguez is the new poet laureate of Los Angeles. He has published fifteen books, including poetry, children's literature, fiction, and nonfiction. Rodriguez is the founder/editor of Tia Chucha Press, now celebrating twenty-five years of publishing, and co-founder/president of Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural & Bookstore. His last poetry collection, *My Nature is Hunger*, won the 2006 Paterson Poetry Prize.