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Nights in The City Beautiful

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

NIGHTS IN THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Veronica Suarez

2018

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This thesis, written by Veronica Suarez, and entitled *Nights in The City Beautiful*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Maneck Daruwala

John Dufresne

Julie Marie Wade, Major Professor

Date of Defense: October 17, 2018

The thesis of Veronica Suarez is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2018

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DEDICATION

For my mother,

Dora de los Angeles Suarez:

Your love is a blessing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Julie for her emotional support, insightful feedback, and amazing edits of my poetry collection. Her creative ideas and suggestions for the organization and structure of my book guided me in the revision process. I am incredibly fortunate to have her as my thesis director.

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I absolutely love writing, and I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to be a part of this program and its writing community: I will treasure the memories. It's been a wonderful and special experience.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
NIGHTS IN THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

by

Veronica Suarez

Florida International University, 2018

Miami, Florida

Professor Julie Marie Wade, Major Professor

NIGHTS IN THE CITY BEAUTIFUL is a collection of confessional, free verse poems that explores sexual trauma, mental health, the exigencies of marriage, and the complexities of human desire. These interconnected poems are grounded with a braided narrative and tackle taboo themes. In Part 1: Monogamy, the reader journeys into the world of Vincent and Victoria, their profound love, and their anxiety disorders. In Part 2: Polyamory, Victoria gets caught in a love triangle when she meets her publishing coworker, Peter Langley.

The book evokes the movement of Romanticism and first-and-second-generation Romantic poets such as William Blake and Lord Byron. Contemporary influences on this collection include Aaron Smith's PRIMER, Stacey Waite's BUTCH GEOGRAPHY, and Tracy K. Smith's THE BODY'S QUESTION.

NIGHTS IN THE CITY BEAUTIFUL merges lyricism with narrative, the ethereal with the physical. It is a novella in verse that delves into the boundaries of sexuality, love, and intimacy.

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I.

MONOGAMY

“yours is the light by which my spirit’s born:

yours is the darkness of my soul’s return

—you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars”

- e.e. cummings

Nights in The City Beautiful

“Y antes de morirme quiero

Echar mis versos del alma.”

- Jose Marti

I.

Little Havana (1980s)

I remember you, Miami:

city streets sleepy,

my parents driving on the highway,

slopes and curves of I-95,

dipping, as if falling from a dream,

bopping, as if on a camel caravan,

in the beat-up coupe without seat belts,

in the tan van’s back seat, swaying,

seeing smoky yellow lights swirl by,

all this seeming like a dream because

when you’re a kid, memory gravitates

in slow-motion, everything epic,

and you a small, fidgety creature

tucked in your parents’ back seat.

I remember you, Miami,
after fishing on Hobie Beach,
near the Rickenbacker Causeway,
the fish weren't biting in the night,

but the stars strutted like studded
rhinestones on Christmas ornaments
while my parents waited, elbows bent
and leaning bodies on the moist pier,

and the waves slurped to the ocean
while I hid in the pup tent with my friend,
while I hid to keep the mosquitoes from biting.

I remember you, Miami.

Those afternoons galloping in the pit
of Mall of the Americas, carpeted for children,
so if they fell when they swung on the railings
their heads wouldn't break. But I never fell.

I was limber, flexible, my hair trailing on the
carpet, my neck stretched and arched,
watching my parents framed upside down.

Later, we would wait forever in lines
that stretched outside the heavy glass doors,
standing behind people bigger than me,
standing and waiting till they gave us tickets
for three dollars each, but I was a kid,
so I got a discount. When we didn't have money,
we'd stay in and watch the palm trees sway outside,
the heat and cool and scars of *Carlito's Way*.

I remember eating at *Centro Latino*:
eggs, beans, cream, *tortilla* on Four Street,
and the old man with the stationed ice cream
truck on our street. Eating snow cones and
drum sticks for fifty cents each.

I remember you, Miami.

II.

Miracle Mile (2017)

I see you, Miami,
in Merrick's visionary
dream—The City Beautiful:

the sunlight sweeps
through the canopy of
banyan trees,
pools of dank caverns and caves,

oolitic limestone homes, quiet-
Spanish bungalows,
ancient tendrils embedded
into coral rock entrances,
columned arcades, pigeons
perched on obelisks,
bell towers ringing of the 1920s.

I see you, Miami, as Merrick
wakes from his dream,
finds condominiums growing
like whitefly infestations.
Suffocating traffic and Big Brother
red light cameras, but even in the
busy millennium of cellphone people,
the city is still beautiful.