

CELIA CRUZ

Hotel room in Mexico City.

Pedro, you lie in deep silence. The man who loved so many women, is here by my side. If we return to Cuba, will we fall into the great abyss? Every revolution is beautiful, but how will we live? And if we leave for the United States, will I be able to return one day to see my mother's eyes?

Here, as I sit in this hotel room, in Mexico City, a city without a sea, I remember my island, Cuba.

Cuba. There on that island of sounds and waves, on that island of secrets, I was born barefoot when we no longer were slaves. I learned to sing listening to everything that surrounded me... the crickets in the night... the sweet and wild sea surf. That island with its sea like an orchestra has given me so much... And I will always be this flamboyant Celia dressed in green feathers and red shoes. My voice is inseparable from the woman I am, my history and my promise.

VIOLETA PARRA

Here comes Violeta Parra... Here comes the Chilean Violeta.

I like to talk about myself in the third person... and I like to go out and sing in familiar and unknown places. Violeta Parra sings to life and to death because she is suddenly surrounded by it.

When I was young and more destitute than a mouse under a bridge, I would sing all types of music in the city restaurants: I would sing cuecas, zarzuelas, and coplas to the human and the divine, and I would also sing polkas. I loved to bring cheer to celebrations in the shanty towns...and with my guitar in hand I would sing wherever they wanted to hear me play.

I like to sing among the tomatoes and the watermelons...the peeled peaches and pomegranate beans. It is as if all the fruits of my country were singing with me.

I loved to sing in faraway countries, where thousands silently listened, where my voice was the voice of Chile. It was a big responsibility, a duty I had to fulfill. It was a sacrifice.

I lost a lot, but I had to keep going.

I lost my Rosita Clara, but I had to keep going.

My little Rosita Clara left for Heaven and I could not say good-bye to her

I couldn't even give her little wings and dress her like the baby angel she was to me.

It was my fault for having been a mother who abandoned her child.

It is my fault for having this passion to sing.

It was my fault that I wanted to travel.