



HORSE LESS REVIEW #11
(Spring 2012)

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I WAS A TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD SEPARATIST

1.

I found a book published in 1925 on a city

In 1994, I took a train to that city

I took the book out when I got to the city

I followed the map in the book's inside flap to make my way

From the train station to a university where I found more books on the city.

I made copies.

After four hours, I left the city.

Four years later, I returned in a moving truck.

I carried a 1998 map.

I put it on a kitchen wall and marked places that existed in 1925.

Dots ringed downtown.

Now the northwest corner of the United Center

Now a vacant lot

Now the Kennedy Expressway

Now the Kruger Gallery next to the Frontera Grill.

(In 1947: the Metallic Letter Company.)

Now a biomedical lab at Pritzker Medical School

Now a People's Auto Parking garage

2.

I dotted the north-south city streets following the local train

To hotels, restaurants and private homes.

Seven days a week. Sometimes you take your book and try to read

On the elevated. You read or you fall down, sleepy.

In 1917, two pensionados lived here

Each going to a YMCA Christmas dinner.

One went to Hamilton College of Law

And the other to UIUC.

This address shows up in the Filipino Employment Agency Files from 1929 to 1932

The membership rolls of the Big Visayan club

The attendees of the Postal Club dance

And the Hines Circle Dance in 1931.

Someone who lived here answered a survey

By Mixon and Noss in 1932 or 1933.

In 1944, this address was shared by two couples.

Impossible to get evidence concerning nature

Of dancing as white person is conspicuous.

The anonymous person is essentially

A non-moral person

3.

The city archivist said

You'll find the Lithuanian social-realist artist Ben Shahn here but none of your kind.

I'm telling you twice.

100 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 10

50 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 11

3 Phillipinos at the Madison-Ashland October 11

10 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 12

20 Phillipinos at the Empire October 12

5 Phillipinos at the Colonial October 12

150 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 13

90 Phillipinos at the Plaza June 22

80 Phillipinos at the Mayfair June 16

100 Orientals and Phillipinos at the Mayfair June 25

65 Phillipinos and Japanese at the Mayfair July 14

85 Phillipinos at the Mayfair August 8

75 Phillipinos at the Mayfair October 13

75 Phillipinos at the Plaza August 4

67 Phillipinos at the Plaza August 18

85 Phillipinos at the Plaza October 13

85 Phillipinos at the Plaza January 5

95 Phillipinos at the Plaza January 24

70 Phillipinos at the Plaza February 16

50 Phillipinos and Japanese at the Mayfair February 17

4.

The owner of a poolroom and barbershop

Interrupted.

Let me ask you something

Before I tell you that.

Just what is it you are doing?

I want to know first:

Are you going to publish anything?

After the libraries closed, I went to new friends' houses

To talk about what was going on in the city.

I looked at their maps of the elevated pinned to their

Kitchen walls and traced how I followed the 1925 local

To the same place.

If I am to really understand what they have to face

I must be able to see things through their eyes.

To do this I must know good and bad,

Ride the elevators where they work,

See how the bus boy is treated,

Go into the basement of the post office and live

That world for a time, visit their rooms, you see.

5.

I cross-referenced a city historical file with a box

On someone's kitchen table.

Where a name and address appears is someone's old attic.

One couple did domestic work together.

Their names are a number funneled into a larger statistic.

The scent of the elevated from attic to archive is too impatient.

28 organizations
28 intramarriages
500 intermarriages
2 dance halls
6 social clubs
3 tennis clubs
4 musical clubs
4 dry cleaners
2 restaurants
6 barbershops
2 pool halls
3 newspapers
2 apartment houses
1 grocery store
3 tailor shops
2 radio stores
1 photograph studio

I copied charters and constitutions for a floating micro-city

Of absentees.

6.

Above where Madigan's used to be

Four couples and three children, 1934-6.

In 1935, one of the men and two children

Were requested to be repatriated

By the man's father

Who was in the Philippines.

I tried to date the best friends of the women I dated.

I tried to date a best friend but she was too familiar.

I counted the bars I hung out in and memorized their

Names and addresses.

Very seldom is one of them asked to a good home.

The woman who kept the box on her kitchen table

Called my days full of leisure.

The landlord raised the rent.

I closed my boxes into a hatchback and left the city.

KIMBERLY ALIDIO works in the fields of contemporary investigative poetics, academic critical ethnic studies and postcolonial history. She lives in Austin, where she works as an adjunct instructor, runs a poetry salon, and dramaturgs for the Generic Ensemble Company, an experimental body-centered theater group focusing on the aesthetics and politics of queers/women of color. Her poetry appears in *ESQUE*, *Bone Bouquet*, *Make/shift*, *Lingerpost*, *Lantern Review*, *Mythium Journal*, *Maganda*, *MiPoesias*, and as a Fact-Simile limited edition broadside. She's a Zora Neale Hurston Scholar, a Voices-VONA Fellow, and a Pushcart Prize nominee.