The Uncollected Poems

The City and Man (1969–1971)

Pickle-faced Estupinan, it is always you
Who in the warmest dreams that later people my days
Capture me and consign me to the asylum or prison
As if, pleasingly, you were a stranger.
I can almost remember a crime against this city
But prison and your holding me thus by the wrists
Redeem it satisfactorily, as I vision
Into the intimate city more marked, in these dreams,
By our friendships. City beside city spread
Across the countryside I draw toward me like an afghan:
In San Francisco you imitate me under the menacing strobe
Or we walk through Ithaca's gorges under floating fairy palaces
While an arsonist is somewhere, and Washington in flames.
This will be a prison without riots or escape
And I shall write on all the walls:
“Stone walls do not a prison make.” Waking from that dream I cried
To see the unfiltered sun at my free window
As in St. Augustine and Ithaca and San Francisco
And country and city, all that lay between.