

Robert Earl Keen, Jr., Mariano

The man outside he works for me, his name is Mariano
He cuts and trims the grass for me he makes the flowers bloom
He says that he comes from a place not far from Guanajuato
It's two days on a bus from here, a lifetime from this room.

I fix his meals and talk to him in my old broken Spanish
He points at things and tells me names of things I can't recall
Sometimes I can't but help myself from wonderin' who this man is
And if when he is gone will he'll remember me at all

I watch him close he works just like a piston in an engine
He only stops to take a drink and smoke a cigarette
And, when the day is ended, I look outside my window
There on the horizon, Mariano's silhouette

He sits upon a stone in a south-easterly direction
I know my charts; I know that he is thinkin' of his home
I've never been the sort to say I'm into intuition
But I swear I see the faces of the ones he calls his own

Their skin is brown as potters clay, their eyes void of expression
Their hair is black as widow's dreams, their dreams are all but gone
They're ancient as a vision of a sacrificial virgin
Innocent as crying from a baby being born

They hover 'round a dyin' flame and pray for his protection
Their prayers all but answered by his letters in the mail
He sends them colored figures he cuts from strips of paper
And all his weekly wages, saving nothing for himself

It's been a while since I have seen the face of Mariano
The border guards they came one day and took him far away
I hope that he is safe down there at home in Guanajuato
I worry though I read there's revolution every day