

## VI

Cruising back from 7-11  
esta mañana  
in my '56 Chevy troquita,  
beat up ranckled  
farm truck,  
clanking between rows  
of new shiny cars—

"Hey fella! Trees need pruned  
and the grass needs trimmin'  
A man yelled down to me  
from his 3rd-story balcony.

"Sorry, I'm not the gardener  
I yelled up to him.

Funny how in the Valley  
an old truck symbolizes prestige  
and in the Heights, poverty.

Worth is determined in the Valley  
by age and durability,  
and in the Heights, by newness  
and impression.

In the Valley,  
the atmosphere is soft and worn,  
things are shared and passed down.  
In the Heights,  
the air is blistered with the glaze  
of new cars and new homes.

How many days of my life  
I have spent fixing up

rusty broken things,  
charging up old batteries,  
wiring pieces of odds and ends together!  
Ah, those lovely bricks  
and sticks I found in fields  
and took home with me  
to make flower boxes!  
The old cars I've worked on  
endlessly giving them tune-ups,  
changing tires, tracing  
electrical shorts,  
cursing when I've been stranded  
between Laguna pueblo and Burque.  
It's the process of making-do,  
of the life I've lived between  
breakdowns and break-ups, that has made life  
worth living.

I could not bear a life  
with everything perfect.

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