

LAWLESS AVENUES

Papa hit him, Mama kissed him
 Made him go to Catechism
 With the sisters in their black and white
 And all the time those city streets
 Were teaching him another kind of wisdom
 When to run and when to fight
 Up at the playground after school
 Listening to tales of the prison system
 And those lawless avenues

Dawn on a half darkened street
 A child's footsteps repeat
 And something there turns them
 Down those lawless avenues

Silent Joe went down so bad
 He was the strongest fighter the avenues had
 Stabbed in the chest he went down swinging
 Someone from some other part of town
 No one even seen it coming down
 And you don't hear no church bells ringing
 And in the violent night the police light
 Sweeps across the lots and the yards
 Following those lawless avenues

Down on a half darkened street
 Armies advance and retreat
 And struggle to take control
 From those lawless avenues

Manuelito's sister Rosa
 Ran away with a surfer from Hermosa
 Manuelito, cuida a Rosa,
 Hay mira como estan las cosas!
 (Manuelito take care of Rosa
 ...Look at how things are)

But who could blame her after she saw
 Every boy die who could have gotten close to her
 Rosa es joven u solo quiere
 ver la belleza del mundo
 (Rosa is young and only wants
 To see the beauty of the world)

Manuel said:
 "You gotta fight for what you want in this life"
 Just before they shipped him overseas to 'Nam

Otra guerra sin razon
Otra guerra sin fin, sin honor
(Another war without reason,
Another war without end, without honor)

And she was fighting to understand
When they shipped Manuelito's body home
All she heard was one more shot
Echoing down lawless avenues

Hoy amigo, tal igual como ayer,
La lucha en el barrio no cambia
Nuestros hijos son los que han de crecer
Por ley de la calle, viviendo entre abrazos
Y chingazos
(Today my friend, just like yesterday,
The struggle in the barrio doesn't change.
Our children are the ones to grow up
By the law of the street
Living between hugs and blows)

Down on a half darkened street
Fathers' and sons' lives repeat
And something there turns them
Down those lawless avenues

En el calor de la calle
(In the heat of the street)
Buscan valor en la calle
(Looking for valor in the street)
Hasta final de la calle
(Till the end of the street)