

A THOUSAND WORDS MORE.

Cold as it was,
we felt secure
sleeping together
in the same room.

Matsuo Basho, haiku poet

IN CHICANO THEATER I OFTEN FOUND THE sanctuary I needed for creative and intellectual expression amongst the playwrights, actors, and directors I interviewed for my "Buscando California" newsletter, a project I undertook to gather material for my graduate thesis on Chicano theater as political communication. I never completed the paper, but my interest in the theater continued, tumbling and leaping forward as a loose pebble in a fast-flowing river, an interest almost bordering on obsession as I drove for hours to watch this and that little production, just to sit in a sports bar as a production competed with a VERY LOUD basketball game on television, or in a centro cultural as planes constantly took off overhead, or with an audience so rude the lead actress stormed off the stage as the cast was taking its bows. A few attractions of the theater.

What I also found attractive about our theater was that the virility/radicalness of the Chicano is reestablished and central, the diversity of the Chicano experience knocking down our own culturally constructed bloody fences, to include the story collages of Chicanas, regionally identified (by US state) Chicanos, and lesbians and gays.

Maria Irene Fornes, even though she is not Chicana, has a connection

to our theater, one that I have followed through Jorge Huerta's lectures, productions of Fornes' work by local Chicano theater groups, and the playwrights I interviewed who listed her New York writing workshop in their resumes with great pride.

She is part of the tapestry. She has given a thousand words more to the next Belinda Acosta, the next Josefina López, the next Edit Villarreal. She has given us and them a thousand more words about freedom, about human dignity, about respect, and she has given me a few words more to write about the theater I love.