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Irony

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IRONY

Ángel R. Oquendo*

Porque a revolução é uma pátria e uma família.¹

'Cause Rosalina Cruz dashes down Rua da Carioca. 'Cause she's sparkling with fury. 'Cause the meeting was a debacle. 'Cause it's always the same. 'Cause no one listens to her. 'Cause nobody respects her. 'Cause she grew up in the North Zone. 'Cause she has a bit of a dark hue. 'Cause she has strong racial features. 'Cause she's a woman. 'Cause no one cares about her doctoral degree. 'Cause she's as entitled as the rest.

'Cause the strike is hopelessly divisive. 'Cause it always generates controversy. 'Cause some of her colleagues are crazy extremists. 'Cause they know that the walkout won't change a thing. 'Cause it's a useless gesture. "*Porque a greve é a festa dos pobres.*"² 'Cause the government won't increase their miserable wages. 'Cause it'll never improve their dreadful conditions. 'Cause even if it wanted to, it just couldn't. 'Cause state employees can't get raises on electoral years. 'Cause students and instructors will ultimately suffer the most. 'Cause they'll have to reschedule their classes. 'Cause they'll have to sacrifice their vacations.

'Cause it would be better to focus on next year's salaries. 'Cause it would be wiser to organize a committee. 'Cause when Rosalina Cruz intervenes, everybody attacks her. 'Cause nobody wants to listen to the voice of reason. 'Cause this time she got fed up. 'Cause she left the room. 'Cause she headed to her office. 'Cause she picked up her belongings. 'Cause she hit the road.

'Cause the bus stop lies four blocks away. 'Cause you have to be careful when walking downtown. 'Cause a woman is an open target. 'Cause crime and violence are a constant threat. 'Cause there's a lot of poverty. 'Cause wealth is not well distributed. 'Cause this is an unjust society. 'Cause rich nations have a higher and more equal standard of living. 'Cause globalization is asymmetric.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz fantasizes about moving up North. 'Cause she should have studied abroad. 'Cause she always wanted a doctorate from France. 'Cause the United States would've been even better. 'Cause she probably would've stayed for good. 'Cause she would've figured out a way.

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¹ JORGE AMADO, *CAPITÃES DA AREIA* 256 (1996) ("'Cause the revolution is a fatherland and a family.").

² *Id.* at 250 ("'Cause a strike is the feast of the poor.").

'Cause the visas require you to go back. 'Cause there are exceptions. 'Cause you can get married. 'Cause you can land a job.

'Cause she never had this possibility. 'Cause she did all her studies at home. 'Cause she didn't even leave on exchange. 'Cause there were fewer scholarships then. 'Cause she was a single mother. 'Cause children complicate life. 'Cause you have to drag them along. 'Cause the straits are direr in her case. 'Cause the father of her kids is a deadbeat.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz knows that there's a lottery.³ 'Cause you can bring your family too. 'Cause the whole thing is just a vain dream. 'Cause it's a *pajarito preñado*.⁴ 'Cause Juan Luis Guerra understood the problem most clearly.

Buscando visa la razón de ser;
Buscando visa para no volver;
Buscando visa para un sueño;
*Buscando visa para un sueño.*⁵

'Cause she's not even going to bother. 'Cause she has never won anything. 'Cause the dice are always loaded against her. 'Cause she must accept her fate.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz turns the corner. 'Cause the bus is about to depart. 'Cause if she misses it, she'll have to wait for a while. 'Cause maybe the next one won't show. 'Cause this has happened before. 'Cause she must hurry up. 'Cause she cannot rush too much. 'Cause she is wearing heels. 'Cause she is afraid of falling. 'Cause high heels are the curse of the *deuxième sexe*.⁶

'Cause the driver, from the corner of his eye, sees her hustle. 'Cause he doesn't want to wait. 'Cause he has to keep a schedule. 'Cause he likes speeding. 'Cause he has no patience. 'Cause he is a bitter soul. 'Cause he even accelerates.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz has to do a forward somersault. 'Cause she barely makes it. 'Cause it's a photo finish. 'Cause nobody helps her. 'Cause she desperately holds on to the handrail. 'Cause people have forgotten what "courtesy" means. 'Cause she has to perform a juggling act to pull out the money. 'Cause the fare went up. 'Cause it no longer costs one *real*. 'Cause now it's one-forty. 'Cause she doesn't have much change left. 'Cause she drops the coins. 'Cause they're barely distinguishable. 'Cause they resemble each other. 'Cause they're refashioned all the time. 'Cause God knows what the point is.

³ See Immigration Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-649, § 131, 104 Stat. 4978 (1990) (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C.A. § 1151) (establishing quotas for entry into the United States).

⁴ Literal translation: "A pregnant bird." Meaning: "A pipe dream."

⁵ JUAN LUIS GUERRA, *Visa para un Sueño, on OJALÁ QUE LLUEVA CAFÉ* (Karen Records 1995) (Literal translation: "Seeking a visa: *raison d'être*; Seeking a visa for never coming back; Seeking a visa for a dream; Seeking a visa for a dream.").

⁶ SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR, *LE DEUXIÈME SEXE* (1949) ("The Second Sex").

'Cause public transportation is a disaster. 'Cause it's plagued by delays. 'Cause the buses are overcrowded. 'Cause the drivers are reckless. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz has no other options. 'Cause she doesn't own a car. 'Cause she can't even take a cab. 'Cause she is on a very tight budget. 'Cause the strike makes things worse. 'Cause, from the frying pan, she goes straight to the fire. 'Cause she went from Guatemala to Guatepeor. 'Cause she wasn't paid this month.

'Cause her bank account is drying up. 'Cause today she made a hefty withdrawal. 'Cause she has to pay the rent. 'Cause her modest apartment is expensive. 'Cause so are the condo fees. 'Cause she has to take care of her children. 'Cause she's all by herself. 'Cause she gets no child support. 'Cause the bills are long overdue. 'Cause there's the gas and electricity. 'Cause there's the drugstore and supermarket too. 'Cause there are many other expenses. 'Cause prices are exorbitantly high. 'Cause the national currency continues to slide.

'Cause the vehicle is completely packed. 'Cause the passengers sweat and jostle. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz remembers the song "*El pasajero*."⁷ 'Cause Leonor played it all the time. 'Cause the lyrics describe an old man. 'Cause he's had a hard day at work. 'Cause he is now traveling home in a bus. 'Cause he's comfortably seated.

¡Qué cómodo voy en esta guagua!

¡Qué cómodo voy!

*Cuida'o con los hoyos choferito, que me doy.*⁸

'Cause he watches the car fill up. 'Cause an agitated lady comes in. 'Cause she sees that there's no place to sit. 'Cause she hits the roof. 'Cause she throws a fit. 'Cause the men don't yield to her. 'Cause she complains bitterly.

¿Qué pasa aquí con los hombres?

*Aquí parece que no hay caballeros.*⁹

'Cause the fellow replies firmly, but with respect.

Aquí hay caballeros, señora,

lo que no hay son asientos.

*¡Lo siento!*¹⁰

'Cause the chorus picks up the refrain.

⁷ MARVIN SANTIAGO, *El Pasajero, on EL SONERO DEL PUEBLO* (Universal Music Latino 1994).

⁸ *Id.* (Literal translation: "How comfortable I am in this bus! How comfortable! Watch the holes, dear driver, or I'll bump myself.")

⁹ *Id.* (Literal translation: "What's the matter with the men here? There seem to be no gentlemen around.")

¹⁰ *Id.* (Literal translation: "There are gentlemen here alright, ma'am. What there ain't is seats. I'm sorry!")

'Cause Rosalina Cruz indentifies with the woman. 'Cause she doesn't want to travel on her feet. 'Cause people get too close. 'Cause they shove and grope. 'Cause males are especially dangerous. 'Cause sometimes they're forced by the crowding. 'Cause other times they act in bad faith. 'Cause they could as well be in *Etc.*¹¹ 'Cause they could as well be the narrator.

*Se hace usted a mi vicio si le informo que, entre tardes, me llevo a donde no voy con tal de ir apachurrado en una guagua Me vacila el apretujamiento. Me endroga, caray. Me repito que el juicio final no será espantoso si es cierto que los pecadores vamos a estar pegaditos, pegaditos, los unos con los otros. Pero, todo tiene su cuestión La de gente mal entrañada que se abraza a la puerca idea de que uno está empeñado en dar chino. Perdón por la ordinariez.*¹²

'Cause the character is disgusting and frightening. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz should concentrate on something else.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz is about to resign herself. 'Cause then she spots an empty seat. 'Cause it is way in the back. 'Cause she's surprised and happy at first. 'Cause she starts wondering later. 'Cause she suspects racism might be at play. 'Cause a black man is sitting nearby. 'Cause nobody wants to ride by his side. 'Cause they think he's unworthy. 'Cause they pretend not to see him. 'Cause they imagine that he might be a thief. 'Cause he has plumped down right by the aisle. 'Cause whoever took the window would be easy prey.

'Cause the other travelers are copper-colored too. 'Cause in this land, *el que no tiene dinga tiene mandinga.*¹³ 'Cause the authorities came up with the term "*pardo.*"¹⁴ 'Cause most folks are on the darker side of the spectrum. 'Cause they're like a Franz Hals painting. 'Cause they display over twenty shades of black. 'Cause Van Gogh cursed Hals for painting that way, so fabulously.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz has no prejudices. 'Cause she's familiar with the sociological literature. 'Cause people make mistakes with probabilities. 'Cause, with generalizations, they do the same. 'Cause she's up on the statistics. 'Cause this topic is her specialty. 'Cause she teaches a course at the institute.

¹¹ LUIS RAFAEL SÁNCHEZ, *Etc.*, in *EN CUERPO DE CAMISA* (1975).

¹² *Id.* at 73 ("You approach my vice if I inform you that in the afternoon I take myself to where I'm not going just to be squished in a bus I get a kick out of the squeeze: a real high, damn it! I tell myself that the Last Judgment won't be frightening at all if we sinners press, really press, each against each other. But there's a catch to everything There are plenty of evil minded folks out there holding on to the filthy idea that one is just trying to rub up against others. Excuse the grossness.")

¹³ FORTUNATO VIZCARRONDO, *¿Y Tu Agüela, A'onde Ejtá?*, in *DINGA Y MANDINGA: POEMAS 77, 78* (4th ed. 1983) (Rough translation: "If you don't have one kind of black in you, you have another kind.")

¹⁴ Translation: "brown."

'Cause a horrible joke comes to her mind. 'Cause it's about another lady. 'Cause she's also in a packed bus. 'Cause she's working on a cross-word puzzle. 'Cause she's sitting next to the corridor. 'Cause a dark-skinned man is standing by her side. 'Cause his sweat is dripping on what she's writing. 'Cause she starts whispering, almost to herself. 'Cause she mutters "black, dirty, and stinky." 'Cause the fellow replies, matter of fact. 'Cause "if it's four letters, it must be 'anus.'"

'Cause Rosalina Cruz doesn't know whether the tale is racist or anti-racist. 'Cause the smarter one is the man. 'Cause the dame turns out to be fastidious and hateful. 'Cause he's probably making fun of her. 'Cause perhaps he's laughing at society as a whole.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz would never tell the story herself. 'Cause she doesn't want to be misinterpreted. 'Cause she wouldn't want to be confused with the bigots around her. 'Cause she finds their attitude disgusting. 'Cause they judge by color of skin.

'Cause the fellow, in fact, looks quite decent. 'Cause he even inspires solid trust. 'Cause it's really appalling how prejudiced people can be. 'Cause they see him in an undershirt. 'Cause he's also wearing flip-flops and shorts. 'Cause he hasn't shaven in several days.

'Cause, suddenly, two policemen burst in. 'Cause they look all over inside. 'Cause they spot the subject. 'Cause they shoot straight towards him.

'Cause they're as dark as he. 'Cause sometimes blacks discriminate the most. 'Cause this fact is well-documented. 'Cause racism is internalized. 'Cause it turns into self-hatred. 'Cause there's no solution to this problem.¹⁵

'Cause the officers ask the man for his papers. 'Cause he shows his I.D., very calmly. 'Cause they search him from the top to the bottom. 'Cause they examine his pockets. 'Cause they look in the bag on his lap.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz becomes indignant. 'Cause she wants to put the cops in their place. 'Cause she's obviously fuming. 'Cause she can't get her words out. 'Cause she often chokes in this way. 'Cause now she's barely able to babble. 'Cause "listen, what's this all about?" 'Cause, in truth, "you have no right." 'Cause she can no longer distinguish what she says from what she thinks. 'Cause she can't keep her omissions and her concessions apart.

'Cause, when Rosalina Cruz is ready to speak, the agents start leaving. 'Cause she took too long. 'Cause what's the big deal? 'Cause these abuses take place daily. 'Cause protesting changes nothing. 'Cause she must file a complaint nonetheless. 'Cause it could be her act of resistance.¹⁶ 'Cause "what kind of a country do we live in?"

¹⁵ See *Castañeda v. Partida*, 430 U.S. 482, 499 (1977) ("[I]t would be unwise to presume as a matter of law that human beings of one definable group will not discriminate against other members of their group.").

¹⁶ See DERRICK A. BELL, JR., *FACES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL: THE PERMANENCE OF RACISM* 12 (1992) (Acknowledging racism can be "an act of ultimate defiance.").

'Cause Rosalina Cruz can't stand discrimination. 'Cause it's only a question of decency. 'Cause it's all about respecting people, regardless of color or creed.

'Cause this position is self-evident. 'Cause, in theory, everyone embraces it. 'Cause everybody pays it lip service, at the least. 'Cause even racists denounce racism. 'Cause they thump themselves on the chest. 'Cause they always swear they're "without sin."¹⁷ 'Cause "*l'hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu.*"¹⁸

'Cause you have to commit to impartiality. 'Cause you must do so and not only sincerely. 'Cause you must also be consistent. 'Cause discrimination is always objectionable. 'Cause it may affect the haves, as well as have-nots. 'Cause double standards lead to the worst injustices. 'Cause you can profane your principles in many ways. 'Cause inconsistency is no better than insincerity.

'Cause, on this matter, Rosalina Cruz challenged her colleagues once more. 'Cause they wanted to obviate the obvious. 'Cause only people like them would defend affirmative action. 'Cause it's affirmative solely in name. 'Cause the government has endorsed these programs. 'Cause it wants to apply them at the university. 'Cause the world has gone mad.

'Cause why spin the inequity in a different direction? 'Cause discriminating against whites does not bring any justice to blacks. 'Cause two wrongs don't make a right. 'Cause you end up hurting those that you're trying to help. 'Cause you taint their achievements. 'Cause you deprive them of incentives to improve themselves. 'Cause those previously favored feel justifiably resentful. 'Cause racial fixation increases. 'Cause so does segregation.

'Cause "the gang of four" reviled her when she stated these truisms. 'Cause the *passionaria*¹⁹ Matilde was most dramatically upset. 'Cause she called her reactionary, *bourgeois*, mystified, and idiotic. 'Cause she turned into the widow Jiang Qing. 'Cause she was the Torquemada of the Inquisition. 'Cause she fancied herself "the hammer of heretics, the light," and "the savior."²⁰ 'Cause her cohorts backed up and echoed her sentence. 'Cause they played the Vienna Boys Choir, but demonized.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz was barely able to speak, once again. 'Cause her reasoning was simple, solid, and finally infallible. 'Cause she was not even able to explain herself. 'Cause she made several attempts. 'Cause her adversaries hurled a string of *ad hominem* arguments, or rather *ad feminam*.

¹⁷ John 8:7 (King James) ("He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.").

¹⁸ FRANÇOIS DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, MAXIMES 97 (1998) ("Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.").

¹⁹ Translation: "the passion flower."

²⁰ See Michael Ott, *Tomás de Torquemada*, CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA (Vol. XIV) (1912) (quoting Sebastián de Olmedo), available at <http://newadvent.org/cathen/14783a.htm>. Olmedo calls Torquemada, "the hammer of heretics, the light of Spain, the saviour of his country, the honour of his order." *Id.*

'Cause she lost her temper and jabbered. 'Cause she stuttered and wanted to cry.

'Cause the proposal included quotas of almost fifty percent. 'Cause it targeted blacks and the poor. 'Cause it identified poverty with public schools. 'Cause it also aimed at the disabled. 'Cause advocates wanted the same for faculty hiring. 'Cause they sought to include women and indigenous peoples. 'Cause the state university has already adopted a plan of this sort. 'Cause there have been similar efforts all over.

'Cause many white candidates took their beef to the courts. 'Cause they were simply "less dark" than the rest. 'Cause they had enjoyed private schooling. 'Cause they had no handicap. 'Cause several secured an initial injunction at trial. 'Cause practically all of them lost on appeal.²¹

'Cause the Supreme Court has yet to make a move. 'Cause some members have publicly touted these policies. 'Cause the African-descent justice is part of this clique.

*Esses projetos, apresentados por parlamentares das mais diversas tendências ideológicas, em geral buscam mitigar a flagrante desigualdade brasileira atacando-a naquilo que para muitos constitui a sua causa primordial, isto é, o nosso segregador sistema educacional, que tradicionalmente, por diversos mecanismos, sempre reservou aos negros e pobres em geral uma educação de inferior qualidade, dedicando o essencial dos recursos materiais, humanos e financeiros . . . a um pequeno contingente da população que detém a hegemonia política, econômica e social no País, isto é, a elite branca.*²²

'Cause another high judge has gone even further. 'Cause, for him, these programs are not only positive. 'Cause they're also what's urgently needed.

*É preciso buscar-se a ação afirmativa. A neutralidade estatal mostrou-se nesses anos um grande fracasso; é necessário fomentar-se o acesso à educação.*²³

'Cause the Chief Justice himself adheres to this view.

²¹ See Mari Tortato, *Juiz Questiona Política de Cotas em Universidade do Paraná*, FOLHA DE S. PAULO, Feb. 15, 2005.

²² Joaquim Barbosa Gomes, *O Debate Constitucional Sobre as Ações Afirmativas*, 68 REV. AJUFE (Associação dos Juizes Federais do Brasil) 195 (2001) ("These projects, which have been proposed by lawmakers of different ideological backgrounds, generally purport to mitigate flagrant inequality in Brazil. They attack what many consider to be the main source of the problem: our segregationist educational system, which traditionally and through various mechanisms offers an education of inferior quality to blacks and to the poor and which devotes the bulk of its material, human, and financial resources . . . to a small sector of the population holding political, economic, and social hegemony, i.e., to the white elite."); see also JOAQUIM BARBOSA GOMES, *AÇÃO AFIRMATIVA & PRINCÍPIO CONSTITUCIONAL DA IGUALDADE* (2001).

²³ Marco Aurélio Mello, *Ótica Constitucional: A Igualdade e as Ações Afirmativas*, 3 REV. IBERO-AM. DIR. PUB. 103, 107 (2002) ("It is essential to pursue affirmative action. The state's neutrality throughout the years has turned out to be a huge failure. It is necessary to promote access to education.").

Eu desqualifico a necessidade de debater o tema [das cotas] como bom ou ruim. Precisamos adotá-las pelo tempo que foi necessário para corrigir as desigualdades sociais Creio que o sistema é importante, assim como a experiência que vem acontecendo no país. Elas são úteis e, no momento, necessárias. Temos de lembrar que, em determinado período da história não será mais preciso, mas agora é indispensável Devemos tratar igualmente os iguais e desigualmente os desiguais. Por isso a adoção do sistema de cotas, no momento atual, é absolutamente perfeita.²⁴

‘Cause he believes that courts must respond. ‘Cause they must uphold this approach.

Ao reconhecer “os efeitos discriminatórios futuros,” o Judiciário “torna legítimas as ações afirmativas.”²⁵

‘Cause he thinks that the government must take the initiative. ‘Cause the judiciary should play a mere second fiddle. ‘Cause he vacated a judgment that had gone a bit far. ‘Cause the court had imposed quotas on a medical school. ‘Cause it had acted on its own. ‘Cause the Public Ministry had filed the original motion.

O requerente demonstra que o deferimento da liminar causa grave lesão à ordem à administração públicas quando o Judiciário interfere na condução pelo Estado das políticas públicas para a educação.²⁶

‘Cause Rosalina Cruz is plainly outraged. ‘Cause it is scandalous that that the judiciary has not just said “no.” ‘Cause the courts are as subject to political blackmail as other public institutions. ‘Cause these are obviously not the times of Frederick the Great. ‘Cause we are evidently not in Berlin. “Sire, es gibt noch Richter in Berlin.”²⁷

²⁴ André Augusto Castro, *Cotas: Efetivas e Necessárias*, UNB AGÊNCIA, Oct. 22, 2004 (quoting the former Chief Justice of Brazil’s Supreme Court Nelson Jobim) (“I reject any discussion of the implementation [of quotas] as good or bad. We must adopt them, as long as necessary, in order to correct social inequities I believe that the system is important; and so is the recent experience in our country. Quotas are useful and presently indispensable. We must remember that at a certain point in history this scheme will no longer be necessary We must treat equals equally and unequals unequally. Therefore, the adoption of quotas is, at the present moment, absolutely sound.”), available at <http://www.secom.unb.br/unbagencia/ag1004-27.htm>.

²⁵ Cristina Charão, *JOBIM DIZ QUE FALTA CORAGEM PARA IMPLEMENTAR COTAS*, AGÊNCIA REPÓRTER SOCIAL, Aug. 20, 2004 (quoting Nelson Jobim) (“When it recognizes ‘future discriminatory effects,’ the judiciary ‘renders affirmative action legitimate.’”), available at <http://www.reportersocial.com.br/noticias.asp?id=699&ed=negros>.

²⁶ *Estado de São Paulo v. Ministério Público, SuspLim 60 (Sup. Ct.) (Braz.) (2005)* (“Petitioner has demonstrated that granting the preliminary injunction would seriously undermine public order and administration, for the judiciary would be interfering in the state’s public policy on education.”).

²⁷ Bernhard Schulz, *Die Brücke als Schlag*, DER TAGESSPIEGEL, Mar. 14, 2007 (“Sir, there are still judges in Berlin.”), available at <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/art772,2059447>.

'Cause these policies are extreme indeed. 'Cause they outrun U.S. measures. 'Cause they reserve a fixed number of spots for the affected groups. 'Cause they do not merely propose tentative goals for the admissions committee. 'Cause they would not pass the U.S. constitutional test. 'Cause the Court over there demands individual assessment. 'Cause it has loudly so held.

A race-conscious admissions program cannot use a quota system . . . ; [T]ruly individualized consideration demands that race be used in a flexible, non-mechanical way. It follows from this mandate that universities cannot establish quotas for members of certain racial groups or put members of those groups on separate admissions tracks Nor can universities insulate applicants who belong to certain racial or ethnic groups from the competition for admission Universities can, however, consider race or ethnicity more flexibly as a "plus" factor in the context of individualized consideration of each and every applicant.²⁸

'Cause Rosalina Cruz is preparing a paper on this whole issue. 'Cause she knows all these materials by heart. 'Cause she'll knock the national approach. 'Cause it's a bad copy of the U.S. model. 'Cause if the latter is bad, the former is worse. 'Cause cultural cannibalism was disastrous this time. 'Cause it ultimately produced nasty indigestion.²⁹

'Cause something happened that was really bizarre. 'Cause a white candidate applied to the State University. 'Cause he claimed he was black. 'Cause he was originally admitted. 'Cause he showed up. 'Cause someone challenged his admission. 'Cause he alleged that he had a jet-black grandma. 'Cause she had "*um pé na África*."³⁰ 'Cause the administrators expelled him still. 'Cause they set his objections aside. 'Cause his mother had declared him white when he was born. 'Cause he'd never tried to change the classification before. 'Cause now he certainly had strategic reasons.

'Cause this case is nothing but the beginning of chaos. 'Cause many will amend their records of birth. 'Cause they will register their children as black. 'Cause they won't be showing racial pride. 'Cause they'll be acting out of self-interest. 'Cause the result will be universal hypocrisy.

'Cause there have been even more grotesque situations. 'Cause, in the capital, an anonymous board determines applicants' color. 'Cause it relies on the photos that they send. 'Cause it seems to come out of a bad Nazi movie. 'Cause, twice already, it placed identical twins in different categories. 'Cause it had to backtrack afterwards.³¹

²⁸ Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306, 334 (2003).

²⁹ See Oswald de Andrade, *Manifesto Antropófago*, 1 REV. ANTROPOFAGIA (1928).

³⁰ Literal translation: "with a foot in Africa."

³¹ ANGELA PINHO, *UnB Rejeita um Gêmeo e Aceita outro Nas Cotas*, FOLHA DE S. PAULO, June 8, 2007.

'Cause the concept of race is empty. 'Cause no such thing exists. 'Cause the aim should be to eliminate that term from all official documentation. 'Cause society should strive to be color-blind. 'Cause it will then be in a position to attain racial democracy. 'Cause this is the only path to the socialist's dream.³²

'Cause the bureaucratic actions would be funny, if they weren't so tragic. 'Cause what is needed is a head-on battle against racism. 'Cause it must take place in all areas, but especially in education. 'Cause illegitimate discrepancies would eventually disappear. 'Cause the authorities must set the process in motion. 'Cause ordinary citizens must do their part too. 'Cause they must have patience. 'Cause they will reach the goal in due course.

'Cause, the police incursion officially comes to an end. 'Cause everything goes on as if nothing had happened. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz continues to burn inside. 'Cause she's disgusted. 'Cause she's ashamed of her fellow citizens. 'Cause she peeks at the man with discretion and solidarity.

'Cause now the bus travels through the inner city. 'Cause it inches along most slowly. 'Cause it's stuck in congestion. 'Cause so are a thousand other cars. 'Cause it is rush hour. 'Cause there's always a traffic jam. 'Cause many more people jump in. 'Cause they are mostly commuters.

'Cause the heat is infernal. 'Cause it has been the hottest summer ever. 'Cause people say the same thing every year. 'Cause they feel the greenhouse effect. 'Cause there are only two seasons around here: *verão e inferno*.³³ 'Cause we don't protect the Amazon. 'Cause it is the lung of the world. 'Cause it is tarred and rotten. 'Cause it looks like those organs shown in the ads against smoking.

'Cause the passengers continue perspiring. 'Cause there's even a disgusting odor inside. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz remembers the forbidden joke. 'Cause she pulls out a handkerchief. 'Cause she wants to protect herself from the stench. 'Cause she still smells of Chanel. 'Cause this morning she put on perfume. 'Cause it is part of her daily ritual. 'Cause she thus starts off fresh and refreshed. 'Cause now she is gradually settling down and relaxing.

'Cause, a while later, the bus finally escapes the whole urban center. 'Cause it then reaches the highway. 'Cause it dances on the land layer over the water. 'Cause it takes off like a rocket. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz feels her heart pounding in her throat. 'Cause in a few seconds the vehicle swishes by the museum. 'Cause it immediately leaves the soldiers monument behind. 'Cause soon the beach of Flamengo is in sight. 'Cause that of Botafogo comes shortly thereafter. 'Cause eventually the bus goes through the tunnel. 'Cause it finally dives into the splendor of Copacabana.

³² See GILBERTO FREYRE, *CASA-GRANDE E SENZALA: FORMAÇÃO DA FAMÍLIA BRASILEIRA SOB O REGIME DE ECONOMIA PATRIARCAL* (1933).

³³ Literal translation: "summer and hell."

'Cause Rosalina Cruz loves this coastal route. 'Cause viewing the sea calms her down. 'Cause you go faster too. 'Cause there's less traffic. 'Cause there's a maniac at the steering wheel. 'Cause she's almost home. 'Cause she only has ten blocks to go.

'Cause, at that very moment, her fellow traveler stretches his arm over her. 'Cause he makes an effort not to touch her. 'Cause she moves out of his way. 'Cause he says: "excuse me, ma'am." 'Cause he acts gentlemanly and elegantly, as in a ballroom. 'Cause he sticks his hand between the cushion and the wall. 'Cause he tugs out an immense dagger. 'Cause he pulls it out slowly, as if he were drawing arms. 'Cause the instrument is truly enormous. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz has never seen such a huge blade. 'Cause she almost faints from the shock.

'Cause the man promptly gets on his feet. 'Cause he gesticulates in a threatening manner. 'Cause, "ladies and gentlemen, please hand over all your possessions." 'Cause "if you cooperate it'll be faster and better for all." 'Cause he begins robbing them, one by one. 'Cause he starts at the front. 'Cause he first hits the cashier.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz can't believe what's happening. 'Cause, "damn it." 'Cause why did the mugging have to take place precisely today? 'Cause why did it have to catch her with a bundle of cash? 'Cause her month is going to be even tighter than ever. 'Cause "*éramos pocos y parió la abuela.*"³⁴

'Cause one of the passengers will not play along. 'Cause the mugger nicks her with the tip of his weapon. 'Cause he barely touches her shoulder. 'Cause he does nothing more than a brushstroke. 'Cause a few drops of blood sprinkle out. 'Cause the victim thereafter gives up. 'Cause she's ready to hand over her soul. 'Cause she begs, "please don't hurt me." 'Cause you never know how you're going to react at the moment of truth. 'Cause you can't tell whether you're going to be a chicken or not.

'Cause the bandit approaches the back of the bus. 'Cause Rosalina Cruz is ready to surrender. 'Cause she undeniably has awful luck. 'Cause she was dealt horrible cards. 'Cause she gently caresses her savings, inside her purse. 'Cause she's bidding them farewell. 'Cause it's a ritual of despair. 'Cause she's prepared to cough up her capital, as well as her valuables. 'Cause she's figuring out the extent of the loss. 'Cause she's going to have to improvise with her finances in a radical way.

'Cause the man finally reaches the last row. 'Cause he then takes her aback. 'Cause he neither assaults nor robs her. 'Cause he simply stores the loot with the rest of his assets. 'Cause he greets her quite amiably. 'Cause he slightly pinches the visor of his cap. 'Cause he uses three fingers: thumb, index, and middle. 'Cause he keeps the ring finger and the pinky raised. 'Cause he displays a delicate gesture. 'Cause he smiles at her. 'Cause he gallantly says good-bye. 'Cause "[H]ave a nice day, ma'am."

³⁴ Literal translation: "There were already a few of us, and then grandma gave birth to a child."

'Cause he stands up again. 'Cause he brandishes his sword. 'Cause he picks up his bag. 'Cause he heads to the exit. 'Cause he doesn't say a word. 'Cause he shows his knife to the collector. 'Cause the latter raises his hands. 'Cause he signals that there's nothing left in the cashbox. 'Cause he's not even going to think of interfering.

'Cause the robber jumps over the turnstile. 'Cause he passes the driver. 'Cause he just looks at him. 'Cause he doesn't openly intimidate him. 'Cause he gets him to open the door. 'Cause he appreciates the docile response. 'Cause he prefers the swiftness. 'Cause he thanks him politely. 'Cause he leaps onto the avenue. 'Cause he disappears completely.

'Cause Rosalina Cruz strokes the envelope anew. 'Cause it still holds her scant fortune. 'Cause who would've known? 'Cause she's flabbergasted. 'Cause she's disoriented. 'Cause she's wrapped up in a silence inside. 'Cause it's deafening. 'Cause she feels as if a colossal wave had crashed over her head. 'Cause an undertow seems to drag her into the water. 'Cause she's not even aware of the commotion around her. 'Cause she doesn't hear the protests of indignation. 'Cause life's nothing but a *tómbola*.³⁵

³⁵ See MARISOL (JOSEFA (PEPA) FLORES GONZÁLEZ), *La Vida es una Tómbola*, on TÓMBOLA (Montilla Zafiro Records 1962) ("Life is a lottery.").