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## Glimpses of an Andean City

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## Glimpses of an Andean City

Lorna Van Gilst

Long before the corner vendor  
    lines up the morning headlines  
or the fruit man  
    hangs clumps of yellow-black bananas  
    and mesh-bagged melons from his stall,  
The sun slides over the mountain,  
    nuzzles into her dark shoulders,  
    dispels the mists slumbering there,  
And kisses her crown with gold.

\* \* \*

Midway through the siesta hour  
The caballero directly across the way  
    —white shirt unbuttoned to his hairy chest—  
    hangs over his balcony  
        strumming his cuatro,  
    belts out thick rich baritones,  
    serenading the neighborhood  
        at midday—  
The local Pavarotti.

\* \* \*

In the last brilliance of the day  
the walking stick man chugs up  
the steps of Canyon Park  
to meet his spotted cows  
waiting in the weeds across the way.  
He opens the gate,  
holds up his stick  
until the traffic light turns red,  
then drops the wand to let his cows  
leap nimbly between honking cars  
to escape into the finer pastures  
of the city park.

\* \* \*

Mr. Cool comes out at night  
to charm the girls in the parking lot,  
his enormous boxers billowing  
skirt-like around slim legs  
from beneath the draping shirt.  
He bends to kiss smooth blushy cheeks,  
draws the whole cluster of females  
unto himself,  
settles back against the lamp post  
to bask in incandescent glow—  
Cool as the night.  
*Chévere* they call him—Cool.