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## At the Tia Nicota

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# At the *Tia Nicota*

Lorna Van Gilst

We sit under broad umbrellas  
on late afternoons  
and watch the Andean peaks  
poke holes in the little pockets  
of clouds  
and sip tiny cupfuls of *amaretto*,  
fresh-ground and rich with cream,  
and nibble *chantilly torte*  
glazed with sweet red berries.

Our chatter spills lightly  
over the terrace  
into the avenue,  
filters over the ice cream vendors  
pushing their two wheeled carts,  
chanting one line—  
“*Helado . . . lado . . . lado*,”  
like Pied Pipers drawing children  
with no money,  
only the wide-eyed yearning  
for one cool moment  
of sweetness.