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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.