

El Árbol

by Juan Felipe Herrera

I was your aged apprentice—many years
my milk gave you light. I applauded,
left my starry leaf-lines at the edge
of your house, your marriages.

When you fell, I covered you
with my ash, my time-notes,
these green zeros for Over Here,
the ones I staged every year.
Now that you lie beneath me, I can
feel you wild-girl orchestra, your
rib-tympani, your womb-girl flutes,
even your sinewy heart-messengers
drilling up to my ten thousand kisses.

From Lotería Cards (City Lights Books, 1999)