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A Rose Battered by Stern October

Pablo Armando Fernández

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A ROSE BATTERED BY STERN OCTOBER*

for José Yglesias

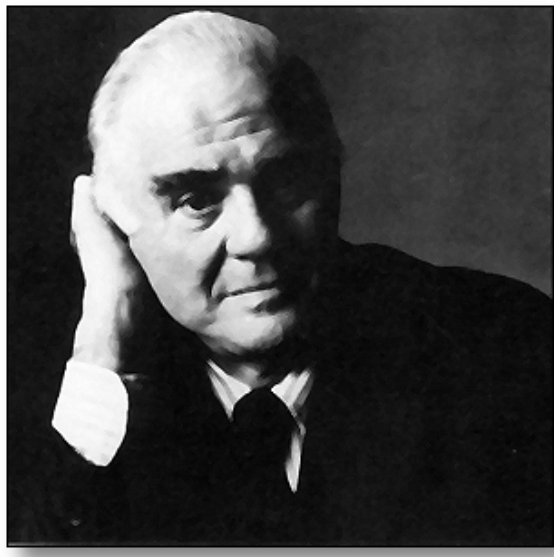
by Pablo Armando Fernández

But now, José, that you belong
to the true fist of the Revolution,
to its pulse, I wonder
where for the first time we met and how.
I'm totally convinced
that you are related
to my inmost being, feelings
and memories of long past centuries,
in which we always shared love, faith and
hope.
I know that you as oft before,
have always come to me, my brother.
It was Miguel Barnet
who brought the sad, inconsolable news.
I heard him in the throes of desperation.
He didn't know how to tell us that you, José,
were on a long, long lasting journey,
away into the far horizon's light,
your land of promise. Tampa?, New York?
That lot given to us at birth, or the chosen
one?
A place to fight and dream. For you, a place
to rest in peace?
No. As always, you are immersed
in the world's chorus, hymns, symphonies
and odes.
José, at times, we talked in either language
or both, the one of the ancestors' blood
or the one learned at school, in a classroom,
in books.
It happens to any child of the Diaspora.
Was the José we love, gallego-cubano de
Tampa?
Yes, sí. Sí, yes, weaving
the truth about them and us.
There as we sat, my brother
and I, made one,
knew that once again we'd meet
to search for all the secrets of the
unsearchable.

* Reprinted from *Cuba Update* (January/February 1999), 36.

Where it began! It has no end, José, no end.
We'll always chat and laugh and, at times,
write letters and books to find the truth
about us all, the truth, José, the truth.
and yet you'll have to give a title
to my novels,
according to the metaphor.
And I, for as long as I remain here,
will have your letters and your books
searching for all the secrets of the
unsearchable.
The good work done, you are where you
belong,
in the true fist of the Revolution.

(La Habana, December 16, 1995)



Jose Yglesias in 1989.

Photograph by James Salzano.