THE PROSE POEM:
AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 8 | 1999

Three Heroes

Morton Marcus

© Providence College

The author(s) permits users to copy, distribute, display, and perform this work under the following conditions: (1) the original author(s) must be given proper attribution; (2) this work may not be used for commercial purposes; (3) the users may not alter, transform, or build upon this work; (4) users must make the license terms of this work clearly known for any reuse or distribution of this work. Upon request, as holder of this work's copyright, the author(s) may waive any or all of these conditions.

The Prose Poem: An International Journal is produced by
The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress)
for the Providence College Digital Commons.
http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/prosepoems/

Morton Marcus

THREE HEROES

1.

Zapata rode a white stallion. When it galloped, its tail and mane were clouds swirling into storms. And when it sauntered into a village plaza, everyone knew that the man in the saddle was no ordinary campesino: under the wide brim of his sombrero, the mud-brown eyes were of the earth, their earth, as if their anguish and anger and the sweat of their labor had taken the shape of a man who had come to avenge them all.

2.

The Baal Shem rode in a buggy tugged by a donkey. A big man with broad shoulders and ponderous belly, he was too large for the rig, but he rode it over the rooftops of Eastern Europe, this tavern keeper touched by God, this confidant of angels, who was such a comforting thought in the minds of his people that when he clopped through a marketplace everyone nodded and smiled, so happy to know he was there that it made no difference whether he was on his way to wrestle the Evil One or to fill a grocery list.

3.

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz slid through the covered walkways and sacred portals of old Mexico, the black hood tenting her head in the same way the black habit tented her body, as if she moved through a longitude of night containing continents and oceans. It was a night where plunging ships wrenched the knowledge of the past into the future, and where, here and there in darkened villages, specks of light, fluttering from the windows of earthen huts, identified solitary figures reading at candlelit tables, learning from the great books of the dead how to make life better for the living.