City of Slow Dissolve

John M. Chavez

*English Language & Literature*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss](https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss)

Part of the Literature in English, North America Commons

https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss/47

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Student Research: Department of English by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
CITY OF SLOW DISSOLVE

by

John Michael Chávez

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

Under the Supervision of Professor Amelia M. L. Montes

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2011
CITY OF SLOW DISSOLVE

John Michael Chávez, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2011

Advisor: Amelia M. L. Montes

City of Slow Dissolve examines identity, displacement, and construction of the self.

Beginning with the persona’s root location of Colorado Springs, Colorado, moving to Detroit, Michigan and concluding with Las Cruces, New Mexico, the speaker of the included poems articulates the complexities of lived emotion (e.g., anxiety, anger, guilt, and eventual acceptance), of the critical evaluation of one’s surroundings, and of the fractures of the self as the result of elected displacement in the service of personal advancement. It is with this in mind that these poems avoid thematizing what it means to be a Latin@ living in the United States today. Thus, the collection is not so much populated by assimilation-driven, narrative poems, as much as it is by lyrical and prose reflections, observations and fragments that comment on how the hopes of personal advancement, the reality of displacement, and the effects of class drift are at times at odds with close-knit, ethnic communities. As such, City of Slow Dissolve attempts to reshape the notion of what constitutes poetry’s articulation of ethnic identity in the United States today.