City of Slow Dissolve

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CITY OF SLOW DISSOLVE

by

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A DISSERTATION

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For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CITY OF SLOW DISSOLVE

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*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.