

when is a window not a window

you may think a window is just a window, and I assure you
it is not, even if you insist on defining it in architecture terms,
as an aperture that lets in light, or a portal to look through

a window in Miami is not just a window, it's a ventanita
that hangs off restaurants and bakeries, this window breathes
its cultural oxygen into our lungs and ansiosos, we inhale

porque that ventanita sells more than pastelitos, cigars y café,
our ventanita solidifies our identity, fills us with a longing
unique to our starved and homesick pueblo in a city where

sorrow dies among the palm trees that sway and silhouette
an apricot sky, a city erected on diasporic mortar and dreams
of antiquity to lessen the pain of loss, yet still disconnected

in a city of hondureños, cubanos, puertorriqueños, colombianos,
haitianos y dominicanos, brasileños, panameños, venezolanos and
so many latinos and caribeños, each gathered at the city's ventanitas

each yearning to forget and remember, and savor the well-seasoned,
the simmered or stewed, the sweet and the salty and the freshly-baked,
and feed on melancholy and sips of yesterday, for a taste of home