JOSELITO: A FOLKTALE FROM GUERRERO
ARCH MCKINLAY

A Nahuatl speaking Indian, Priciliano Carranza Díaz, wrote the following text for Mr. McKinlay in 1962. The informant is a native of Zicapa, Guerrero, near the Mezcala-Balsas river.

The student of folklore will be interested in the curious "twist" that takes place at the end of the tale, when what had seemed to be a simple folk story reveals a significant and important religious theme. (F.H.)

TEXTO


TRADUCCION

Once there was an orphan child. Both his mother died and his father when he was two. He never knew either of his parents. Both had died. So then he went with his godparents, the ones who had seen to his baptism. He had reached 14 years when the one who was like a father to him, the one who had raised him, to another village. He said to him: "Go greet my son. Today is a feast day." He gave him 5 pesos in case he should want to eat something. He told him: "Just as you see other men doing you do the very same." So he left on his way rejoicing. He reached the village. He went straight to the


Cuacon itatas de on ichpochtle, mero itatah ocua-

place where he heard horns being played in a store; he did, and went in and sat down. Just looking around; some are smoking, some are drinking. So he bought a drink for himself. He too drank and bought cigarettes. He began to smoke.

Then there came out a young girl, but O so beautiful! He liked her; she belonged to the family that ran the business. In addition she saw the boy. She also liked him. He said to her: “I wonder if you would like to marry me.” “Ask for me of my parents. I love you the way you love me.” So then the boy said: “You are well-to-do; you are pretty. I am just a poor boy. I'm an orphan. They won't give you up.” The girl said: “That does not bother me; You ask for my hand tomorrow. Take a hanky, a picture locket, so that the one you recognize as your father will believe it and come back tomorrow, all of you.” So he went home. He spoke to his parents. Well, they arrived at the store and they asked for her hand.

Then the parents of the girl, to be exact, the father, got mad.
He shooed them outside. He bounced them. They went home. Then Joselito began to cry. He went to a mountain to a woody spot. He reached a very high bluff. He said: “I will throw myself off and commit suicide.” Then he started to cross himself. He finished and was ready to jump off. He was grabbed on the hand. Whereupon he saw who it was: an old man. He began to upbraid him; it was really, seriously now, Our Father God. He said to him: “What in the world are you doing, boy? Do you want to kill yourself?” Joselito said to him: “Now my parents have gone and asked for the hand of a young lady in marriage, but her father got mad. He was just about ready to kill us. He chased us out of his house.” “O that’s why you were on the point of doing away with yourself. Come on. Let’s go. Today I myself will go with you.” So they went all of them including his parents. They reached the store; and began to talk to the father of the girl. Again he got mad. Her father grabbed a stick to clobber each one of them. Then said God, who was an old man; he said to a man: “Go fetch the priest to marry these young folks.” The man went and got


the priest. They were married, Then the old man took them to the bluff where Joselito was going to jump off. But at that time the way was good, no, first it was rocky, full of trees, very bad. On top of the bluff there was a beautiful house. Then he said to him: “Now son, you will live here with your wife. You will work here. You will crack these stones, but you will hit them carefully and slowly with a hammer. You will not split them in half. No. You’ll just keep smoothing them off nicely. I am going away. I’ll be back in a week.” The old man went off, but Joselito and his wife did not have any idea who he was, and seriously it was our Lord Jesucristo.

Well, then, Joselito began to work, and they hit them rather hard. The stone broke right in half. Then he looked more closely; money poured out and nothing else, but he was really a scared boy; and his wife said: “Now our father will chase us away from here.” Well the day came that the old man, God, arrived. He was aware of it all. He did not scold him. He just said to him: “I told you nice and easy.
Now you will go take your wife and go see your father-in-law. You'll tell him to lend you his animals, 50 mules, and his sacks; and 7 men, his hired hands, to take all this money.” Well, they went he and his wife to her father’s place and they told him, and he got mad. He said to him: “Where are you going to get that money? You’re just going to take my mules where you can sell them so you can feed my daughter. No, I won’t loan you a thing.” Then his wife said: “Let’s lend the hired men the key. They will return the beasts.” “All right, then, he said, ‘let them go.’

So they all went rejoicing, men, mules, Joselito, his wife, and they reached the bluff. Then they saw a house really lovely, the money lying on the floor, so, they began to fill the sacks: nothing but silver pesos. They just kept saying to each other: “The father of Joselito is really rich. He has more than our boss.” So then they filled all the sacks with the money. Everything got squared away. Well, they loaded
the animals and they all left. Then the men began to drive the mules, slapping and pushing. And as the mountain was steep, and the road downhill, the bags started to tear, the money spilling all over, the mules trying to pass each other on the run, for the sun was already setting. The men who were driving the mules, went along picking up the money. They kept stuffing it in their pockets. Some they went along sticking it under rocks. "We'll come back tomorrow and get it." Well, they reached town at the market square and began unloading. There they piled up all the money. He spread it out on a mat. There he slept with his wife. Just the men went to her house with the mules. They told her father: "That Joselito is really wealthy, more than you. We brought nothing back but money. Just make a light there where they are sleeping he and his wife." He gave light with a lamp. Whereupon he saw all shiny the money, his daughter with her husband on top of it all. Well, the next day the sun rose, and there was a beautiful house, really beautiful to behold. Many men, women, selling, clothing, just all sorts of things, a shop. O! he beat every one in town! He was
san tlimach de noche, se tienda. A noche oquintlan
de pueblo! Solo yehua oetlan, miyec pitzomeh, mi-
yec huacaxtin, miyec cuanacameh.

Se tonahli oquinnotz imontahuan. Ichan oquichih-
queh miyec tlin nocua. Se pitzotl omic, se bueye,
miyec nacatl, musica, tlatzotzonah, nijtotilo, sihua-
meh, tlacameh; otlan fiesta. Onoxijxiquej noche
imontah, imonan; onocuepqueh cuapitzomeh. Oyahn-
quej ipan tepemeh. Joselito ihuan sihuau onocuepqueh
Totahtzin, Tonantzín. Aman nemej tiopan.
Ompa otlan. Nochi terminó el cuento de Joselito y
Soledad.

the only one who really made money and beat others at competition,
lots of pigs, lots of cattle, lots of chickens.

One day he called his in-laws. There at his home he prepared a
lot of food. One pig was killed, one ox, lots of meat, men were there,
women, music, they were having a band, there was dancing; and then
the festival came to an end. They went and lay down, both of them,
his father-in-law, her mother-in-law, and they turned into wild pigs.
They went off to the mountains. Joselito and his wife turned into
our patron and our patroness. Now they are in the church. That’s the
end, the end of the whole matter, of Joselito and Soledad.