

## Manuel Maples Arce

### *City: Bolshevik Super-Poem in 5 Cantos*

Translator: Brandon Holmquest  
Poetry chapbook | \$10 (\$8 direct from UDP)  
Hand-bound. 32 pp, 5.25 x 7.5 in.

Written between 1922 and 1924, the year it was published, *City: Bolshevik Superpoem in 5 Cantos* is a long-form poem that became the most politically and aesthetically aggressive of the career of Mexican avant-garde poet Manuel Maples Arce. The subject is the "City" in state of revolutionary turmoil; however, the specifics of what city remains opaque. References to Mexico City and Xalapa are both discernible in the text, but perhaps only as the inspiration for a future Stridentist city, elsewhere referred to as Stridentopolis. The poem evokes the City tracing a narrative of revolution from its early exuberance, through periods of violence, and finally to a sort of hollow, confused disappointment in the final canto. This narrative was directly drawn from Maples Arce's own experiences with the Mexican Revolution and its very messy aftermath.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

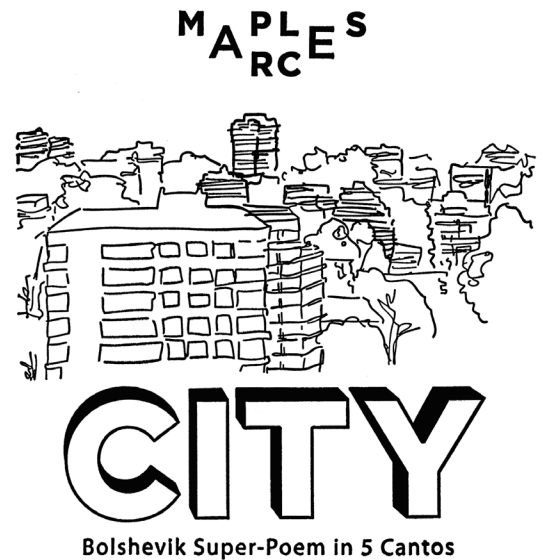
Manuel Maples Arce was born in 1898, and studied law in Mexico City. He was a judge and later Secretary General of the Government in the city of Xalapa, state of Veracruz, under the controversial revolutionary General Jara. During this same period he became the central figure in the Stridentist Movement, a very ambitious avant-garde group that flourished under General Jara's protection. Composed of a small group of poets and visual artists (especially engravers and printmakers), Stridentism bore resemblance to both Futurism and Dada, as well as many similar groups throughout Latin America, but was much more radical, politically, and came much closer to the realization of many of their goals, since they effectively were the government in Xalapa for a brief period in the 1920's. General Jara was eventually deposed and murdered and the group dispersed. Maples Arce went on to become a diplomat, serving as the Mexican ambassador first to France, then Canada. He continued writing poetry as well as essays and criticism. His collected poems was published in Mexico in 1971. Maples Arce died in 1981.

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#### FROM CITY:

The unhinged masses  
splash musically in the streets.

And now the thieving bourgeoisie will tremble  
for their riches,  
robbed from the people,  
but someone hid the sheet music to  
an explosion beneath their dreams.

Here's my poem:

Pennants of cheering in the wind,  
hair on fire  
and captive mornings in her eyes.

Oh musical  
city  
made entirely of mechanical rhythms.

Tomorrow, perhaps,  
only the living fire of my verses  
will light these humbled horizons.

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