



A Collection of Cultures

by Gracie Boyce

In Columbia, I have seen many diverse populations. There are a lot of different backgrounds and cultures present anywhere you go, from movie theaters to restaurants to the library.

Nowhere in Columbia is this more apparent than at the Soda City market downtown. Walking down Main Street, there are seemingly endless food choices, and they are not just typical American dining options. There is authentic Indian cuisine, arepas from Colombia, Jamaican dishes, Greek gyros, and so much more. The best part is not even the delicious tastes and wonderful scents coming from each food truck and tent -- it's the people you meet.

The people serving this wide array of dishes are people who genuinely want to share their culture with others. The rainbow of flags waving through the air tells many stories. Meeting you with a smile, the vendors are excited to share their diverse experiences, telling you about their lives and their dishes. This makes Soda City more than just a market -- it is a meeting place where many

cultures interact.

Soda City also shows that there is more to Columbia than meets the eye. It is not made of one ethnicity, or even just two. It is a melting pot. The customers themselves are widely varied -- there are families with young children, college students, and older individuals. I saw a man wearing a kilt and playing the accordion. He was one with his music, swaying and smiling as he played. I saw booths of handmade dreamcatchers, necklaces, paintings, and pens. These pieces were beautiful, especially because of the hard work the makers put into them. One stall, with wooden signs reading, "Home," really reminded me what the Soda City market is all about: pride in cultures, but also calling this city home.

Each person shopping or selling goods or food in the market has had a different human experience; this is clear. Despite this difference in background, all of these people have one thing in common. They have come to call Columbia their home

Stranger

by Ellie Pobis

champagne morning magic

Bleeds

- seems to drag itself -

across a painted porcelain sky

wake as you are (natural)

coffee brings the blush home

dreams or worry melt

I smell the fairytales now

each dust mote a myriad

of leather and love notes

has this city always been

familiar?

how long will it be

before I stop pulling memories

from the depths of this

place?

I have not even

left but I wonder

if it is possible for me to

miss the palms

- the people I should

have met sooner -

the way a ghost misses

its body

I imagine God hunkered with

an oak pipe

a somewhat unreliable

golden compass

pointing through

broad curtain walls

of burgundy

and midnight shadowed glass

he tells me faces

even the ones I cannot

understand -

are more important than

guns or time or

any of the things that

I am scared will stop

my living

before I am finished here

I want to learn every language that

does not speak my

name so that

I never have to be called

stranger

photo collection by
Caroline Williamson

Rainbow

