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## *Noche de Los Muertos: San Miguel de Allende*

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# NOCHES - DE LOS - MUERTOS

*San Miguel de Allende*

**Andrew H. Oerke**

A green fluorescent skeleton snatches my shadow  
and flings its dark sleeves round his neck for a cape  
and says he'll give it back if I make him a swap:  
He's dying to barter his bones for my breath,  
and hang my flesh on the mast of his wingspread.

Before I know what is happening,  
we're waltzing in front of the plaza  
and everyone picks up tempo in a toe-tapping,  
thigh-slapping jubilation at apogee  
level and pace. The crowd swells to see if  
this mobile of calcium can cop my soul.  
His death is the antidote to my life;  
I am the flip side of the dancing dead.

Thistly fingers enter me and it's as if  
I had fleshed *him* out and left myself a shipwreck  
on a rusty shore. The pirate struts off  
as the body I was though no one saw the flip  
of identities. I dangle away stiff  
as a puppet and rickety as a skeleton.  
I'm looking for someone to confirm me  
as myself, since I have lost the secret  
of how to put myself together again.  
What kind of man is he who has lost his shadow?