

CHEN YO JIR IN A MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Holly Welker

This depiction wants to be
more than declarative,
wants to comment on the
human condition, so the subject
is not a rooster, an almond
or a groove of bamboo.
The subject's name is Chen Yo Jir
which is ancient and means
"telling stories, has desire."
Chen Yo Jir hasn't noticed
the orange and fuschia flowers
stapled to trellises and on the walls
of the dim Mexican restaurant
where he is eating tortilla chips and salsa,
salt grains scattering
off chips onto the table.
He is impervious as well to mariachi music
piped in from somewhere and so
sitting at the table, he begins to
 cry think swear hate
hum. Chen Yo Jir begins to hum.
He knows he's humming off key.
He hums the verses and sings
the chorus because he forgot
to bring a newspaper and still
has not noticed the walls
thick with many flowers.
Right now his name, some old word
meaning "Telling stories, has desire"

seems as much a part of him
as the salt grains falling
from the chips are a part
of the table. He has let us
construct this image around him
and now he is bored
by our attempts to give
his life more meaning than he
ever did, he thinks we
should go to the movies
and leave him alone.