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VICTORIA CARPENTER

'La sangre en el cemento': Violence, Fantasy and Myth in Poetic Accounts of the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre

La sangre en el cemento, en las paredes, en una enredadera:
nos salpica, nos moja de vergüenza,
de vergüenza, de vergüenza.[1]
(Jaime Sabines)

Before October 1968, the Mexican student movement had had several incidents of conflicts with *granadero*[2] troops at demonstrations throughout the country.[3] The clashes intensified in Mexico City, where university and vocational students had a number of altercations with the government forces. Over the summer of 1968, demonstrations became more frequent as the students protested Mexico's hosting of the Olympic Games, which they saw as an excuse for the government to continue repressions. The *granaderos*' excessive use of force against unarmed students contributed to a number of violent confrontations.

By October 1968, the movement's activity was supported by rail and electrical workers' strikes. A student rally was organized on 2 October to express support for the arrested rail trade union leaders.

1 'Blood on the concrete, on the walls, / on the ivy: it spatters us, / it soaks us in shame, in shame, in shame.' All translations, unless indicated otherwise, are my own – V.C.

2 *Granaderos* are paramilitary troops trained by the Mexican army; known for their ruthless tactics, they were used repeatedly to disperse student demonstrations, including the Polytechnic Institute strike of 1956 (see Stevens 1987: 221).

3 See Carpenter 2005: 476–7.