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Ya se Acabó la Raza

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The following is from J. P. Harrington's notes on the Kitanemuk language, collected at Fort Tejón around 1917. The data are from José Juan Olivas, a Ventureño Chumash married to a Kitanemuk woman. In addition to providing glosses for the Spanish words, I have arranged the material in lines, in an attempt to accentuate its character as a "found poem."

When José Juan came here
there was no Bakersfield—
no stores there
and just one saloon.
The only store in that vicinity
was kept by a Jew named Hirschfield
at Panama (a town near Bakersfield *pacá*). [on this side]

There were no courts or jails—
la pistola era la corte [the pistol was the court]
and the man who shot first
won the dispute.
The country was full of bad men—
gunmen and gamblers.
José Juan *andaba con* them a little [went around with]
because he had to or be shot.
He knows the caves where they hid—
Francisco Gámez and the other bad men.

José Juan was here
when the old courthouse and jail
were built in Bakersfield—
about forty years ago.
When the railroad came,
the town grew rapidly.

There were lots of Indians here
in those days.
About 50,000, José Juan estimates.
And now there are only 40,
he exclaims.
Ya se acabó la raza. [Now the race is finished.]