

Dig/
For my Abuela in mourning.

Doom
Settles on her tongue.
Dry and thick,
As she savors the arid bite of ash
Left of her siblings bones.

Dust
Muddles into clay between her lips,
Sealing her teeth together,
Like the damp Mordor of a crumbling home.

Abandoned,
Cracking at the edges,
Dandelions clawing their way through to the light.

She's buried us all in her mouth.

Afro-Latino

The first time I went to Chile, we entered the mercado:

My tia

Pulls a chess board of mapuche soldiers

Dressed in red

Spaniards dressed in blue

From the dusty bookshelf of a man dressed in red, and speaks of her birth.

A product of both,

Her grandmothers crimson tears rolling down los andes

And white men Cowling above her

She will call this strength.

Call it, "sangre sagrado"

"Our white blood is how we found god"

She will say this

with gravel in her shoes as we walk the 10 miles down Antonio Varas.

She will step

With the same limp as her grandmothers

Who's blood still nourishes this soil.

How her feet ache,

How her raw heels fill la serena

With red

That made the ocean fast of the salted flesh of men.

Tia will speak of my hair next

"Culpa de su padre"

She will say,

Fault of your fathers

I nod in silence.

A sweaty palm,
Rips its way through my scalp
He
Collects my skin beneath his fingernails
Food,
To take home and feed to his sons.

My family buries me beneath their tongues
To taste what the beginning of a bloodline feels like

To see if its dirt
Or the bottom of our grandmothers feet

Call me oveja
Alpaca
Lama
Spoiled mule
Lucky pack animal

“What a fine cloak you will make”

Princesa

This face
Is Only erosion.
Spitting image of my father
Molded with his own fists

Unhinged jaw,
Split lip,
Swollen tongue,
Purple type gorgeous.
A regal bruising

Like my ma
Like abuela
And my bisa too

Call me princesa
All busted mouth and chipped tooth

Ain't it sweet?
Cherry water ice smile
Tongue heavy with metal and salt

A taste I will ask my sister about
She will not know it

Tell me swallow
Tell me purge the body
Till it feels ladylike again

My big brother will notice
He weeps for me, til I wade in a pool ankle deep.

The salt as thick as glass
To cause my wounds and clean them.
Like an angry apology
That ain't his own to give in the first place.

I am forced to stare into the water

Find the boy I used to play with in the mirror,
Gave another name to

So Mami wouldn't worry
I'd lost her in my chin
The cleft of my father.

Baby girl already has his fists
His knees
Grainy
From kneeling onto concrete

To only learn submissions
As pain
As weakness

Not thank god
Not I'm sorry
Not I love you

White Girl

White girls' tongue lashes my back
Licks the blood for her lips
And I Bend into a crescent moon
From the sting

My flesh
Still wedged between her teeth.
I rest
between tongue and canine
Where meals have been made of me

Skinned
She Spins my derma into a spool of thread
To weave herself back together

Wrapped in my pelt
She Trudges through my blood.

White girl knows Sacrifice
By peeling my hue
By eating my body

I hope she chokes on me
A limp dead thing
And I fester
And she can smell the rot
In her song

Taste my blight
as it builds its stench,
Becomes the plaque digging into her gums.

She's Always got a cheek full of skin
Always drooling
White girl don't ever go hungry

Her belly swells with all of my parts.

No one comes looking for me.

'Cept for mama

Falls to her knees

Cracks the earth in two

Screams For her baby

till it rains, and the sky cries with her.

Grief made from thunder

She Shakes the world with her pain

It won't matter

White girl will call her agony:

“Death of the beast”

The world

hurries to dry her tears.

The Vernal

Frost melts from our backyard.
The old mulberry tree
Bears a Low hanging fruit,
Dark and delicious
She stains our tiny sneakers, hands and mouths purple.

As the soil burrows beneath our feet
And regurges the sweet frost water gifted to it that morning,
Mami picks a honeysuckle in bloom
from the old bush,
through our rusty gate.

Places it between her lips
And sucks spring into her,
Not unlike the ground itself.

I plunge my tiny hand into the dirt,
uncover a pool of salamanders the color of a water ice and sherbet sunset.
“Can I keep one?”
“No.” she says

