### Wanting in Spanglish

After Wanting in Arabic by Trish Salah

Ι

Lips meet skin creating new ridges saturated With something more saccharine Than the champurrado¹ taste of home

Palabras como querida y mi amor Float in our atmosphere

Conquistada y querida<sup>2</sup>

I've always been bad at translating things Like belonging and the way I carry casa y patria<sup>3</sup> in you kiss The brown of the skin

And with every press of lips That ignites muscle recognition I am reminded of The clay that my body is from

Mi tierra

II

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A warm chocolate maiz based drink <sup>2</sup> Conquered and loved

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Home and motherland

Mi amor, Does your heart beats faster When I look at you With the freckles In my earth

brown eyes

I know what it feels to be colonized How it feels to be rendered into product While commands slip through

diente y boca<sup>4</sup>

Mi amor, Do you own me?

The tethers between us something softer than What I'm used to

Would you cling to me if they broke?

III

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Teeth and mouth, where colonization starts.

No extrano<sup>5</sup> The bits I gave to you as keepsakes

I feel held And complete en Tus manos y sudor<sup>6</sup>

You have traced the curve of my waist

With fingertips so sure of their pattern

That they

Painted something nuevo en mi cuerpo<sup>7</sup>

I let you write your language

on my body

And I told you I loved you in a language You didn't know

Te amo

Te amo

I don't think I need to And

Translate this

Cariño<sup>8</sup> For you,

 $^{\rm 5}$  Think "I don't miss" but full of a kind certainty and tenderness  $^{\rm 6}$  Hands and Sweat, I'll give you the tears

<sup>8</sup> My love, my darling, sweetheart, my dear. Term of endearment too soft for the english language.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> new on my body; Terra Nova

#### Ten Paz, Corazon

filtered rose gaze traded for cut up shards of a fractured view of galaxy nothing if not full of vacillating cravings

and you pull out your hair wishing on the broken strands for diamond clarity

the pink of brain left with a chronic missing the whole organ battered by the rattling spare currency from a past life

and you become metallic finding copper souls rusted down into roadside diners

the small and stary prism where you dry off your sadder years in chromatic light

the unstable frames will kick you out after you've given your heart a full home cooked meal

the mercurial nature of your appetite making your body prickle with stagnation and before you know it you burst into movement

road dusted with tired bits of bone linked to helpful witches who tell you the secrets of the universe

they teach you how to conjure up calm to ease the twitch of need a secret you'll use when you're ready

### **Pulled Muscles**

/the ache starts in my legs/ a stretching ligament/ pulling away from my corpse/ heavy with a muscle memory that does nothing but keep me dizzy/

/words come out slurred with unbuttoned grief/ i almost want to apologize for the sounds/ perhaps no movement in this body is mine/ maybe no words from this mouth belong to me/ is it my fault anyway/

/a dream like distance/ that no one can wake me up from/ the cracks in torso still too wide with pain/ to sew shut with the leftover thread/ from an old hand me down dress/ a divorced line tangled in blood clots and gore/ in /side/ body/ legs/

### The Reckoning

The world has ended many times before
Threats of dark and rosary beads
Where conversations don't have to end in god and sermons

Unrest lingering in a reckoning of "our fathers" and Rainbow kisses stolen between hymns Salvation in the mouth that leads the novena in between thighs

A brief gulping of air before Landing among hands that only held prayers Whispers of divinity in between all the decay

To account for sins and your unclean body A confession of a conditional love written In your copy of the bible

Just another haunted home
Tears salting the driveway trailing to grave angels
A tether to holy ghosts forever calling after me

Apocalypses without absolution Searching for resolution in warm places When will the world stop ending

It gets dark at the end of the world

# <u>Paloma Negra</u>

## it played often

you know the rise and fall, the unfurling heart and kitchen scene where your mother sang off key and taught you to make enchiladas the red sauce covering tortilla, lingering on hands before nestling into mouth

it fills the timbre of your voice and if anyone were to pay close attention they could hear the ache of a body disoriented the melancholy melody weaving in and out of your life one of three landmarks you can still name

and even as years leave tea rings on fingers each circle a new border and chain link fence that your spanglish can not cross without stumbling words torn open, their remains melting into tastebuds that know the salt of grief intimately

there are still sweet tethers to a home where your abuela taught you to dance in the space between stove and table, her hands guiding and voice beckoning where the words *Paloma Negra* can tumble off your grief stricken tongue and sit with you while you try to remember your way home