

Fathers & Sons
For B.R.

By Jasminne Mendez

I felt my pericardium cry when
my brother started fucking

la virgen on Guadalupe street. He
preferred her store bought

tortillas to my home-fried
smashed tostones. Preferred

the mestiza sand dune curl of her bones
to the haitian cut kink of our blood.

Preferred the milk of an iris to the sap
of this jasmine. & I withered a bit wondering

if my father was the only black man
I could ever love.

Morir Soñando

Jasminne Mendez

*“Like a parrot imitating spring,
we lie down screaming as rain punches through
and we come up green”-Rita Dove*

I had a dream once:

My machete hands slice open
calcified white green caña.

I milk my tongue into a glass
of homemade morir soñando. Watch it
roll into “r’s” colorado, singing: perejil, perejil.

Lash my sun kissed lips with sugar
to sweeten this café con leche skin.
Paint my pupil with the pulp of a banilejo mango
and bathe in seawater sweat singing: perejil, perejil

Cave into the earth that surrounds me.
Fill my flesh with fango. Swallow
the sounds of the island and bloom
from the bones buried beneath. Wake up
wounded. Wake up singing: perejil, perejil.

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Cutting cane for the general:

Stalks of severed limbs lay bare.
Sea foam spills from veins.

Machetes hack at wounded flesh.
Fill breath to the brim with salt.
Bathe the earth in sangre---

Set the field on fire.
Fire to harvest the cane.
Fire to flower the flamboyán
Fire the scent of parsley.

Fire the sound of blade
hitting bone hitting body----
Fire 'till it swallowed me
crimson----Fire 'till I die
while dreaming.