

Holy Week, 1625

By Javier Perez

Each year, we celebrate *semana santa*
through reenactments
of a crucified white body
and its subsequent rerising.
As I would gaze
I felt a friction chafe my pupils raw
until the hues of the soil distorted into
unsacred
the skin beneath my nails colored blasphemy.

But if the seas can harmonize
the azures of the heavens and
indigo of our hells,
I, too, can paint
a sensible landscape
out of the gamut
of my blood,
its acrimonious polyphony
and warring cacophony.

To better understand the pulsating rebellions
that fuel my *picaro* ways,
I mined my veins for
auriferous Saints decorated in rust.
History is my ormolu, El Salvador my kiln,
and I am molded from hypotheticals and
tumultuous tribes of rimes revolting within my Spanish:
*¡cacaotero', monos vola'os del campesina'o, que
estamo' demasia'o encachimba'os! ¡siempre seremos cimarrones, mis
Salvatruchos!*

When I stumbled
across missing pages of history
torn from my skin,
I uncrumbled my thighs and
pinwheeled myself across velvet storms
until I was suspended in dance
frozen in the dissonant movements between
scarlet ankles and
makeshift names christened onto us
like splintering placards;

as the winds wailed with incantations
summoning my underskins to infiltrate the gospels,
I quieted my ghosts
– as I was taught to do –
so that this brown skin felt less entombing
& more resurrection reenacted.
The sun thrice tugged on my neck
& I denied its fire before I heard
a police siren crow like a rooster.

“la raza”

is an obsolete prayer.
It has yet to intimately nail my naked feet with
the *machétes* of slaves in San Salvador
who too reenacted a (up)rising during *semana santa 1625*;
a revolt that reminds us, 400 years later,
Jesus was also killed a Black rebel.
This is a wound *Salvadoreños* have hidden beyond the ether
beyond prayer’s reach,
for fear of not being resurrected
after bearing the cross for so long.