

Tacos de lenguas

By Elizabeth Jiménez Montelongo

Tacos de lenguas you force-fed me...
And now
I can waggle my double-edged tongue
Right back
A flinty, sparky
Weapon
Electric currents
Right into my pen
Writing to you words
Held in for 500 years
From the genes in my blood
To the genes that spill my blood
Y aquí en este banquete
De tacos y lenguas
Y tacos de lengua
Una gran reunión
De pedernal, fuego
Sangre e historia

Here, I speak words
That burn, that spark
Fires that spread
Fires that burn
Bonfires
Fires that burn out
Fires that leave ashes
Ashes to cover my body in
Ashes to weep in
Creating rivers of ink
That tattoo the body
That tattoo the soul
Ashes to fertilize the roots
Roots in ashes
Find other roots
Roots that move
Roots that shake
Roots that rattle the ground
A ground of ashes
Under which lie bones
Bones that won't lie still
I saw them rise and connect
I saw the skeleton come together

Dancing skeleton
Dancing with the corn plant
Madre maíz
And neither had roots
Holding hands
No triangle
A circle
Cycling, spinning
Up into the air
Chose to stay here
Return to earth
Feet on the ground
Roots in the earth
Roots in the ashes
On the bones
That won't lie still
Rising from the ashes
Rise from the ashes
I rose from the ashes
Ashes to ashes
Ashes on my forehead
Ashes in a cross
A cross burned to ashes
They painted on my nopal
And I'm going to strike
This lengua on another
Ay, que chispa
Ashes, ashes
But I refuse to fall down
Even when I'm six feet underground

And mira
Como le hago::
I am a lengua
That you label me with
I am my thoughts
That I nodded to
I am the palabras
You all shoved in my mouth,
But I spit them out
In a different order
And I order them to emerge
Spill in chispas
Run in ashes and tears
And from there
Where my two brown feet are planted

Emerges a quetzalli phoenix
With a long coiled body that rises into the air
Feathers, maíz, and white flowers
¡que llueva!
Into rivers and lakes and underground
Into oceans and humidity
Sips of lágrimas to lágrimas
Tears to tears
¡Que llueva!
And may the plants grow strong