while listening to the rhythm of their hearts that beat underground\(^1\)

We make our way among the massive forest plants.
To and from movements of ants that bear leaves, trunks,
red earth until the scrub that provided us with cover is uprooted.
We read every trace of nature in order to learn
whether the small gestures we love still remain.

body by body,
hearts cleansed,
we advance among the fields
\>
\>
ica toyolo yectli
tinehnemih pan cuatitlamitl
attentive eyes discerning churned mud,
hands and legs unearthing hope.

body by body,
we explore furrows in search of their prints.
Wave-like movements of ants that convey aromas,
the smile and taste of the final kiss.

We want to know whether they sleep wrapped in moss,
whether they feel cold or hunger, not unlike at the start of life,
for we await them still with warm embraces and favored treats.

body by body,
we dig in silence
while listening to the rhythm of their hearts
that beat underground
\>
ininyolo tlatzozona tlalihtic.

Translation: Tanya Hungtinton

\(^1\) Video-poem published in 2016: [https://vimeo.com/499224899](https://vimeo.com/499224899)
The backbone in memory

Broken bones slumber on the highway

Omimeh tlapantoqueh huan cochih pan ohtli

the beheaded

the sorrowful
tlen mocuezoah

those who can no longer weep
tlen ayoccanah huelih chocah

scatter their dust over the damp soil
quiizceloah inincuechchopan pan tlalli xolontoc

holes bored into the facades of houses
their walls bleed
the smell of lead blankets the parks
and in the gardens one by one
the clusters of their skin are sown
sweet bougainvilleas never to be reborn

tlen ayoccanah huelih chocah

the flow of water is spectral red heraldic red
atlahco quipiya atl chichiltic

as crimson as the rust of memory
claret the dread of a wizened cherry

Their bones also shake
in a death rattle of substratum
mineral vapors caress
like this the salty pain of a backbone
along a spine of dreams:

huitzli tlen temiquiztli

the scarlet fatherland burns

notlalhui tlatla

Translation: Tanya Hungtinton
The Altar

cross
desert
escape

I am one and a thousand women reborn of lead
The cry their eyes shed
in their last look towards the road

I am all this deaf night as I turn the corner
and feel my footsteps drumming.

Later
rusted iron in my hands
the heavy hours

I have eaten the bread
and it is like chewing on your entrails;
I moisten your body
with my morning coffee
to warm up memories;
I wrap your flesh in leaves
and coffined
you rest among the gentle embers
of the incense holder
quartered like a bird against the glass,
with the taste of fields of ash
between your lips.

Translation: Norma E. Cantú
**El Delivery**

An immigrant runs along the roof of the car
the train crosses the Metlac bridge at onethousandfivehundredtwentymasl
an immigrant does acrobatics
as if the tip of the world were moving forward
in sync with the mountains
all quiet on the great northamerican passage

Perhaps later on there will be

checkpoints the screeching of the rails
but for now he is recording on his cell the clouded forest
and the black orchids rushing by in a succession of images

A sound reaches him from a scaffolding
in the distance he sees half-tethered to its bars
the garifunas dancing babies on their breasts
later they will inhabit the deserts of Texas
or the humid pastures of Bronx summers

Though now an immigrant is defying gravity
rapturous to reach the North
his body will toughen to endure the storms
distributing food and christmas gifts
while other folks take refuge in their central heating
he will be called a delivery boy
and his services will be flaunted in red letters
at the entrance to every restaurant
he will become *el delivery* as he balances on his bicycle
and the train presses on
an immigrant defies gravity
leaps over the desert and then the sea from the tip of the bridge
babbling a distant land
that even he cannot remember

Translation: Mary Ann Newman
ants gently sweep the paths on which they will walk*

some nights tiny lights fly up from the earth
the sacred plants ignite
while ants tenderly sweep the paths on which they will walk

although now little fireflies live in the grass

there too are my hands, bleeding and splintered with thorns.

Translation: Kim Jensen
a woman dreams again and again in an impenetrable jungle
her visions are crystal claps of thunder
from the alum stone that dissolves the evil in the comal

In medicinal dreams the sacred plants reveal

the body is plagued with invisible animals

Translation: Kim Jensen
Rainy Season*

Sitting among flowers
in this dark place where tiny lights fly up every night
I think of the rain that brings the sacred plants to life
I dream of them, and of my mother:
her absent embrace
and the warm smoke that invites me to dissolve into its body.
Just a few more days of these lonely struggles
in which a sweet and melodious poetry dwells
the sound of birdsong barely reddens the cosmos:
it is the hour when light drains from the land.

Translation: Kim Jensen

* Originally written in Nahuatl/Mexikano. Translated into Spanish by author.
Tiawanaku
Poemas de la Madre Coqa

Mother Coqa  ecstasy and lye
leaf that nourishes us with such divine lineage
your blood gallops through the nervations
leaf that reads the future of a people
drenched in moon and lightning
Mother on the north-south border
powder for snorting
beneath the flashing light at Bar Route 36
     kuka cocaine rock line white Goddess
your names reverberate
in an equinoctial procession
pijchar  insalivate the leaves with baking soda
in the chewing  grind up the alkaloids
    light up then the lye
    mill the cactus quinoa corn cob until you see ashes
annihilated Mother in the corners
offerings and deluge over the encampments
that bring back the missing with portraits and posters
Mother Coqa
Massacre of All Saints
the smell of the blood of camelids
water wars
the smell of the blood of the forgotten
the aromatic petroleum wars
effervescence of the mouth
foam that’s inhaled like sand from the salt flats
  rail blow white horse
that you excavate your epidermis
you exacerbate the anguish in the slave’s head
no more asphyxiation in the mines
Mother Coqa
the words shape you differently
  coke snow devil’s dandruff
molecules bubbling on your lips
  bump baking soda rock
sniff pijchar acullicar chacchar
used-up leaf that numbs the umbilical cord
show us your sap
mother of green alkaloids
glorious coca paste.

Translation: Ilana Luna
The haze over your lips Khana Willka
you offer me a bag stuffed with coqa petals
and the lye amplifies their flavor for the pijcheo

and ashes over your eyes too
with greenish teeth you cut the leafstalks
you give me cleaned alkaloids
I try not to whimper in the corridors of the terminal
even though the elevation sickness has persisted since the border

once we’re in the Black Pearl bedroom facing the station
I regurgitate dreams of blades thrown from the brush
a military persecution in the altered connections of my mind

there are weapons that never fire
some children that hide in the cane fields

there are twisted stalks that bury their corpses

the coqa relieves the effects of the soroche

    nausea  practically sudden death from walking
    anguish from the galloping in your chest

adrenaline flows through this dream
also my botanical curiosity to recognize
each filament of the plants and the art of domesticating them
inquisitive to know

    to whom these detached nails in the swamp belong
to whom the epidermis consumed by red ants
with what refined technique they were disappeared

the juice on your lips    Khana Willka
returns me to the geography of the hotel
we chew the vegetable cud until it contains us
it plunges us into the same place as the no-names.

Translation: Ilana Luna
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

German Clinic
La Paz, Bolivia, July 30, 2013.

Emergency clinic      Deep geography in July      The 29-year- old patient ___________ is admitted to the German Clinic  numb  she subjects herself to twelve hours of lab tests  Conserved: cell tissue  lump in her esophagus  recovery from projectile vomiting  Medical release without incident  a bland diet is recommended  sunny strolls  in Abaroa park  avoiding nightmares and neurosis  The next day  relapse due to anxiety  An ultrasound and even a CAT scan show an aurora  screams  abdominal pain unrelenting vomiting  angioma on the left parietal  Thirty-six hours of exploring the organism: blood biochemistry  urinalysis  hepatic panel  lipid panel  photosynthesis of the hundreds of leaves that she ingested to cling to the edge of the world  Admitted due to the shock of a liver scare  returning pale from galloping deep in convulsive times  A topographic scan of the body shows that the coqa  causes tachycardia: inject 10 mg Amiodarone for spontaneous flare-up and treacherous abyss  put to sleep with intraarterial Flunarizine from a Chilean pharmaceutical  The patient is a migraine  grinding that ends in teeth worn out by sleep  arrhythmia  auditory hallucinations in the air  Preserved: subcutaneous muscular tissue  exposed to forty-eight hours of medical tests In spite of everything  brain  osseous parts  depression within normal range.

Translation: Ilana Luna
In the Land of the Gas Wars

Daily I bask in the sun in Plaza Abaroa  The Narciso Lima-Achá Papers by Jaime Sáenz spread across the quotidian lawn  I go to the French café and sketch faded galaxies over Edmundo Paz Soldán’s Burnt Palace  I describe with fear  between the pages of Liliana Colanzi’s Our Dead World  how the eye of God emerges from the clouds each afternoon  My habitual early morning bath knocks me out until midday: the smell of peeled mandarin and fried rice  I cool off this body confident that one day it will drip hot water  but in this land of the Gas Wars there is an abundance of electric showers  They say that once upon a time chairs flew from buildings and rubber bullets blinded people  They say you could hear the agony of the unborn in the bellies of their mothers see through their bones  smell their open wounds  They say that to pronounce gas sounded more like the Latin chaos  like the word bellum  They say that there were dead and disappeared by the dozens in Chasquipampa  El Alto  Ovejuyo and Warisata  Smooth and mute like the stones of Tiawanaku  under this showerhead I’m overcome by a terror of dying electrocuted.

Translation: Ilana Luna