Title
Poems To Heal My Motherland

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M ama, when did you decide
my life was worth more than bruises and
battered words, although that’s all you knew?

you were my age, when Los Angeles clinic
confirmed your Chicana bronze skin stretched
to make room for a womb
ripe with my Persian
refugee father’s seed

you named me
in remembrance of the jasmine flowers
rooted in his motherland gardens
but watered me with the
drum of your fierce Aztec heartbeat

I don’t know how to stay silent with the
Constant rhythm of your affirming words

So mama,
Tell me who gifted your words
that inspire my poems
Tell me where you found
the solace between abuelo’s
verbally abusive lips
Tell me when your secret source
of strength to say I am enough
flooded in
tell me how my war-torn
Persian father
artist like me
contorted metal in directions
Bougie buyers were hyped about buying
but beat berry blue and olive green
designs on your bronze body-canvas, mama

even in those moments of battery
you taught me how to stand stoic against panic
never embrace silence in a man’s presence
and etch these memories into ancestral teachings
for our future daughters
of how our womyn respond

I am proud to share our domestic secret
and echo your fierce Aztec rhythm heartbeat
in every breath
every word

You were my age mama
When I moon swelled your belly
Now I moon swell
Sisters minds with
Our stories and strength
he a curandera
soiled in spider plants
and Pacoima rooster wake up calls
my grandmother spoke of angels
in corners causing my baby breath
to coo for hours/fluently speaking
tongues of light and lambs innocence

she embalmed words in elegance
unveiling power behind silence
and healed through her
open immigrant wounds
we spoke in coos, literature and spices
some call it goddess dialect
some call it crazy
like those wild womyn
Franciscan friars burned in
abuela’s Chihuahua hometown In
sake of Christ in sake of genocide
In sake of progress

All she left was stories mummified
In laughter and coos
Abuela I still see angels
But they moved in irises
And outlined people’s exteriors
Sometimes they battle for
Brightest light in room
Yet war is never sought
by the divine

so when will we finally
return to cooing and how
do I awake sleeping curanderas
afraid of playing with angles?
notted beneath
   Lily chin and fig stained lips
   Her Hijab rested out of respect
   A silent agreement to peace in public
   An easy target for stones turned
   Jacketed metal

   Neda, Iranian womyn
   of Kemet blood and cheekbones
   last words– I’m burning
   heat from speed caused
   Almond irises to wash opal
   Color of future they want

   Replay replay replay video
   In my Oakland home
   Of bullet’s mumified journey
   beneath skull and youthful skin
   Camerman shook violently
   As your tender body melted with gravity
   Crazy how breath keeps us lifted
Crazy how I hold my breath every
Time video replays

Neda, martyrs are contraband
During mud-thick war
dead matter/ a sacrifice
Over dead matters
eastern war embalmed
in petroleum since 1980
reason why you attended Tehran protest

Neda, a small confession is needed
my Iranian family in Tehrangeles*
myself included drive cars on concrete
celebrating escape of Shah of rebellion
of laying in front of gun in sake of
chanting freedom behind gun

Neda, this is a love poem to you
Una ofrenda para mi alma detras tu
A freedom scream response
To awake, the American-Iranian
Mummies and uncock the gunman