

Presenting

introduced by Xavier Cavazos

KARLA YARITZA MARAVILLA

Caulked by the Linoleum Roses I Read You the Song of Dimples

Anahi bends brows to bridges. Pupils bordados con hilo curl scab fingers to glossy stems.
Thumbs crunch ashy braids tailed with Vaseline. Carnations bleed virgin oak. Rings splinter
pink mussel between smooth brown powdered legs. Christmas comets ferment woodlice jengibre
maple roots. Caballeros profile button-toe-mary-jane-pleated muchachas through ribbon knots,
white eyes pulping papaya behind enredos, little brown fish beads wrinkle pebble palms and oats.
Leticia seeds cinnamon bark in Anahi's laugh to oyster summer parking lot silt. Pours rosemary oil
globules to glaze cheek deposits. Beaded rosaries of cough syrup hack olibanum to rose mantels.
Anahi, la muñeca de trapo, tilts her rose clay head in the sombreado reredos de María,
as if diciendo: ¿María donde estan tus hermanas Lele y Dönxu? Es hora de cantar!

Maravilla's language is rooted in an aesthetic of separation, spirituality, and family. And the images she uses to conjure those themes—to do the heavy lifting of making meaning—are generational: the herbs, the food, the objects of closeness. In those moments of offering up her world to the reader, her poetics becomes one of transformation, and this is one of the things that is most exciting to me about her work: In the colonizer's literature of Latinx peoples, the curandera has always been portrayed as a witch, and those spiritual practices as witchcraft—the darker construction of a pure light spirituality. But Maravilla's poems reclaim the space occupied by the curandera, honoring those ways of worshipping and illuminating the culture around them as ceremonial. Karla is not a border poet. Her work is entering the universe at a time when different languages and tongues and genders and identities are becoming more fluid. Her whole aesthetic is moving in a beat of embrace—an agricultural beat, a field worker's beat, a hot beat. Almost like a marathon, the heat never ends. And then it becomes transcendence, healing. It becomes prayer.