

There was a time when she felt cursed by that magenta summer. That summer, her favorite went to Spain to learn how to be a Mexican and a Californian. She was curious to know what he ate on the plane before he saw the only thing beautiful enough to make her forget him. She thinks he must have eaten from a shallow box with cold chocolate, a round of salami, and cream. The meat's salt falling between his fingers and onto his knees, the way wine forsook his glass during his confirmation classes when he was a boy. At night, she saw his newborn face on the cold bright day in the bicentennial, the same year her father graduated from high school in a south valley town. The same town she liked buying palm-sized bread when she passed through the dry heat of early October. How did the waves taste when he got off the plane? What did he think when he saw the thing that would make him curse the seafloor and draw the dip that made their valley so friend-like, so pretend she wanted to scream in a clay cup until the maker's name trailed off? When she was twenty-four, she worked in a potter's studio, never skilled enough to make things but sweeping out the patio for customers to tread over the roughly set tiles and garden rocks. On her last day there, before she quit to return to college, she made a set of prayer hands out of warm red clay, and the pointer finger curved to the north like it was telling her something.

The Fast

by Monique Quintana



meowmeowpowpowlit.com

#MMPPisLIT