

CARLA COIMBRA

To Trizavó, (My Nameless Relation)

I found you sleeping next to an abandoned shoe,  
Covered in a blanket of orange reef,  
Your bones weeping on the blue green sorrow of the crumbling house.

In the garden, on the patio, in the gaps between wall and window,  
Your secrets –  
Cure warts with lit matches,  
Stir my stomach with a splintered wooden ladle,  
All clotheslines and hay fever draped under the smell of olive oil soap.

I choke – I catch my throat when I think of you  
I want to know how you peel a clove of garlic,  
I want to hear you speak your name to me as you thread a needle,  
I want to know how the sweat of your hands makes your bread taste.

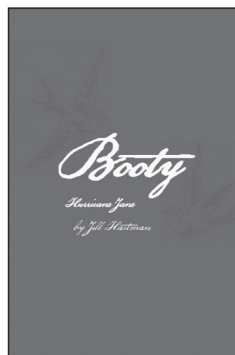
All I have is this Singer sewing machine,  
Packed inside my carry-on with wheels.  
I tucked my underwear (crotch side down) to cushion your relic;  
But they made me open up – laughed at the display.  
I would have liked you to pass customs freely, without the threat of men and their gloves.

I look past the bare vowels of the word *saudade*,  
Into the salt stained canvas of a body that could have been yours.  
To find a name that will suit you well,  
But Singer fits best.

*Carla Coimbra is a writer who constantly abandons Toronto for the roaming goats, fresh sardines, and towering eucalyptus trees of Fonte Arcada, the small Portuguese village where she was born. Coimbra is currently working on her first book of poetry.*

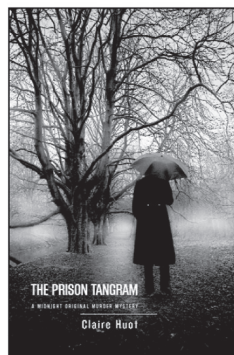
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