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3 Syllables

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3 Syllables

Celeste Landry Hernandez

3 syllables = <3

my favorite delicacy is uttered through a slick spilling of 3 syllables:

pu - pu - sas

a savory explosion of
frijoles,
queso

y maseca in my mouth.

before the mix has hit the oiled pan, the salivation begins.

thousands of sensory cells awakened—

it is more than several ingredients combined together,

it is a taste of history.

an homage to the Pipil tribe 2000 years ago.

if only they could witness their legacy living ferociously

despite the colonization of conquistadores in their lands and bellies.

this land used to be *Cuscatlan*,

“land of jewels,”

before the invasion of 1524.

before the introduction of pork and cheese,

there were only squash flowers

chipilin

and mora.

vegetables in a crescent moon shape preceded

dairy and meat in their full-moon form.



pu- pu - sas

reminds me of mae,
her ring deep fingers scoop 5 cups of maseca and 2 of water,
beating the corn flour mix till its consistency is of rich thickness,
a fine line between
too wet & too dry;
with the muscles to sustain the
queso, frijoles, y carne
that collide together for 3-5 minutes—
replicando el baile tradicional de Xuc
flavors melting within each other,
before their delicate removal off the pan,
tucked gently under a cotton towel,
como un bebe que duerme protegido con ángeles y diosas.

no matter the years that pass
my selfish hands slip under that blanket,
disrupting the peace too soon,
burning my tongue with the first bite.
right on queue.

pu – pu – sas

remind me of san jacinto.
 a toyota pick up and a local tienda;
 a pit stop for
 neighbors,
 schoolchildren,
 and locals.
 what they don't know is that in between sales,
 la dueña,
 mi abuela,
 prepara el curtido en la casa.
 4 bags of cabbage,
 with sliced onions and carrots,
 boiling on medium heat for 20 minutes.
 before strained and cooled,
 embedding sal, pimienta y vinagre balsámico in the mix.
 stored overnight in the fridge before indulged for
 breakfast,
 lunch,
 and dinner.

pu – pu – sas

plural, not singular.
 for you can't eat one without longing for another.

-c.alejandra