

# CARRY THESE LINES

## TO DO LIST:

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Dear Reader,

Poetry & writing in general has always been more than words to me- it's been a way of keeping memory alive, of naming what would otherwise stay silent. These poems & short prose story- are small offerings, seeds for you to carry. Some of them have been published in journals, some live only here. All of them are meant to remind you that you are not alone. I added some other interactive parts in here. Feel free to do with as you so please. Its a pleasure to build and connect with you. Tag me if you create something too! Id love to see it,

Thank you for letting me share this with you.

With love,  
Joely

## BLOOD SONGS

In the morning, my tía scrubs her arms  
raw at the outdoor sink,  
soap suds and water splashing against  
cracked concrete,  
the mango tree shedding heavy fruit  
beside her.

She says it's the heat,  
but we know she's trying to erase the  
brown that won't leave her.

At abuela's table, over plates of arroz con  
gandules, we hear it again:  
"Don't marry too dark - mira esos labios  
thick like thieves!"  
They say it sweetly,  
laughing into their glasses of malta,  
as if prayers for whiteness are normal  
things to serve with lunch.

I walk through Loíza's narrow streets  
later, the murals shouting resistance in  
every blistered stroke:  
Bomba dancers, Black saints,  
faces like my cousins' - proud,  
uncorrected.

Once, I straightened my hair for my  
quinceañera,  
watched it steam and sizzle under the  
iron.

I smiled for the pictures,  
my curls buried like bad news.

(cont'd on page 2)

## Blood Songs (Cont'd)

But my daughter -  
her hair grows like wild vines,  
her skin deep as roasted coffee.  
When I braid it,  
I whisper the names of ancestors they tried to  
forget.

I teach her:  
our blood sings -  
through hurricane and hunger,  
through borders and betrayals.  
It sings.  
It sings.  
It sings.

(First Published to PREE Magazine Edition 14)

## Notes

[illegible]

## Create

Create

## The Small Infinity

The soul walks out at dusk  
to measure what was kept  
the sparrow's quiet testament  
the river that wept

A stranger on the corner  
hums a fractured song  
while nations break their mirrors  
insisting they were strong

The body is a lantern  
its glass already cracked  
yet flame insists on breathing  
though wind would call it back

We live as thread unspooling  
between the hand and sky  
the loom is built of silence  
the cloth will never die