



I Carry a People in my Voice

Ivania Erazo¹

at the sound of Sumpul flowing
I am on the deserted path
I keep stretching through the highest of trees
needing the Sunlight
from the loneliness of the forgotten echoes
my heart beats,
joy unravels the veins, and particles of what I'm holding so close
I have been summoned to give in, to disarm
my Creator, whispers more Wind than roots into me, swaying from the east to the west
the sunset kisses me as we embrace
the sun drenched land, crackling through my feet
searching for anything that looks familiar, a pot, a spoon, a necklace, a vase
all I see are broken pieces
where have my people gone?

silence

silence

I keep stepping over my words, I don't remember what they sound like
na hu a? Nahuat? Nahuatl?

Tlakaxoukayotl- 'no se dice así, me dicen'! se dice **libertad**, freedom

fuego, fire, *tletl-* 'ese idioma no!'

a language that we gave the land of the Savior

El Salvador do you remember?

silence

silence

the essence of peace has left my land
as the birds no longer sing, and the waters are stilled
Creator, I hold my arms outstretched, will you tell me where to fly next?

Visionary leader and activist Ivania Erazo has dedicated her life to rekindling histories of hope, purpose, solidarity and identity. Born into a family of revolutionaries fleeing the government sanctioned terror of El Salvador's civil war, Ivania's passion for justice and restoration began at a young age.

Now she is a catalyst for change and a fiery advocate for the human spirit. In service locally and internationally, she has transformed her family's struggle into inspiration for civic contribution. During her 2 year term as president and co-founder of the Hispanic Fraternity Association, she helped to institute the city of Hamilton's celebrated Hispanic Heritage Week. Ivania is the 2013 recipient of the Jose Eduardo Memorial Scholarship.

With pen and paper, Ivania gives voice to the dignified struggles of marginalized and displaced immigrant communities. Hers is a legacy of freedom, inspired by the words of Monseñor Oscar Romero, "Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the only force that will overcome the world".

I carry a people in my Voice
I hold a memory that was stolen
I carry a people in my Voice
I see those that were born from my people, suffer
the land is infertile,
Mother groans for there is no fruit,
the people are unable to cultivate, the tyrant has stolen from them.
the children are bare, the grandmothers are left behind
and the fathers and sons have been disappeared and killed

**I carry a people in my Voice
a language that we gave the land of the Savior
El Salvador do you remember?**

The Wind whispers the Creators desire to me

I have given you the ocean, swoon it with your sharp gaze
I have given you the Harvest, it is sprouting out of your hands
I have given you the Land- let it reform itself under the heat of your heart
You are my beautiful, perfect creation, I will continue to liberate you from under the possession.
I remember your language, I see your people

Walking down the streets of San Salvador, I see the echo of my people in the gaze of the campesino
I see the destiny of my people in the children, that sing freely
The strength and kindness of the Creator in the hands of mothers
tired but valiant, the mother continues to rise every morning.
May the sun's fire never turn away from us, may it remind us of los que lucharon
the water that breathes,
the wheat that has risen- it continues to sway through the earth rebuilding, replanting.
this land is mine, it is yours

it is mine,

a people I carry.

I carry a people in my voice
I carry Efrain's dream
and Milagro's passion

Milagro's voice is broken
Efrain, where are you?- hijo, dónde estás?

Milagro's memory holds ***la matanza, el cerro***

Guazapa mutilada

But Milagro's vision holds the saviour resurrected, the land erupting with paz

Choosing life.

Me

I am in this foreign land, looking for answers

I carry a people in my voice

We are the generation ripped from the struggle, belonging more there, than here.

My heart ripping at the seams, faced with generations of pain

a peace maker- my grandmother

a guerrillero- my uncle

a liberator- **our people**

the people I carry in my voice

Libertad.

Tlakaxoukayotl

I carry a people in my voice

a language that we gave the land of the Savior

El Salvador do you remember?

El idioma se llama liberación.

liberación del corazón

not liberation of peace documents signed,

but a liberation from sorrow,

a liberation that brought the sons and daughters back to their mothers,

a liberation that brought back the disappeared,

a liberation that honored those who fought for truth.

for freedom,

for dignity,

be liberated,

be liberated for the walls that surround you will be left in history- even in hours of uncertainty,

of shadows, of darkness

with the signs of liberation: shaking off oppressive yokes,

bringing joy to hearts,

sowing hope

Sowing hope, sowing truth, sowing back the fibres of a country that was dismantled because of the fear of truth.

Tlakaxoukayotl

Libertad

Liberación del corazón

Bajo el cielo azul, the people of El Salvador rise, knowing who they are.

Guerrero

campesino

profesor

persona

Tlakaxoukayotl

libertad

Liberación del corazón

unraveling walls in my heart, as I rise with my people

In a land where only the invisible threads of my heart remind me of what I have not seen, but of who I am.

I hear my people wailing in my heart, weakened, but not broken.

A land of liberated people, is not oppressed, is not tortured, is not assassinated, is not disappeared.

Deprived of hope no longer, in perfect union with Redemption

A El Salvador, no se le olvida.