

## Summer Vacation (preface)

Josi Mata

Who will eat our blood  
on their tables tonight

This meager wage  
that feels as hard  
as the hoe in your hand

## Summer Vacation

I have walked with  
drank with  
the man  
of hell  
the devil  
pouring  
our hot, painful  
into the  
nightmares we will feed off  
of again

I have blurred my vision for him  
over hands that  
slammed his  
childhood into me

Many times i have worked  
next to  
his darkness  
smelling of weeds and sweat

holding off his rage  
in hot afternoon

hiding his beer

burying the bullets  
he thinks he has hidden from us

I have seen his eyes follow the sun  
fiercely holding his head in  
his hands  
he has thrown bombs  
at us  
rocks  
hoes  
food  
*tablas*  
dishes  
belts  
shoes  
insults

that day I washed his  
t-shirt full of  
my mother's blood

his mouth nervous like  
a dog  
still quivering from  
his anger  
from that place  
deep

inside  
the rib cage  
which may have  
spread like wings  
if he were in another time

his emptiness filled with

real hunger unerasable  
we are within reach for his  
quenching

I have worked  
next to, given water  
to the *diablo*  
spat  
in his food, picked  
ripened tomatoes  
seen salt  
caked on  
his clothing  
from hard work

he whistles  
*un corrido*  
he carries a tune  
as any *mariachi, el diablo*

he will call my sister *puta* tonight  
he will call me ugly  
and try to kill my innocent mother

he will pine sugar  
and drink  
to his hearts content  
me and my brother will bury his bullets  
again

The Line

Josi Mata

I'd take your  
hard  
knives  
and rough hands

your name is not Yin Lee woman

sit on this here bench  
and  
look at you  
through  
warm breath  
steaming on a cold day

I'd grind coffee beans

chop garlic, stand all day  
not Yin Lee

These men, younger than you,  
do not  
deserve  
your smile

You do not deserve your  
nervous laugh,  
your  
hurry up  
and serve

anxiety

I, for this  
want to take